2001 BC College and Institute Aboriginal Former Student Outcomes

Special Report on
Aboriginal Former Students
from the 1995, 1997, 1999, and
2001 BC College and Institute
Student Outcomes Surveys

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Advanced Education

OWG
Outcomes Working Group

iss RESEARCH & IT SOLUTIONS

Fall 2002

105-03352/

2001 BC College and Institute Aboriginal Former Student Outcomes

Special Report on Aboriginal Former Students from the 1995, 1997, 1999, and 2001 BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Surveys

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Advanced Education

OWG
Outcomes Working Group

iss RESEARCH & IT SOLUTIONS

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Main entry under title:
BC college and institute aboriginal former student outcomes. --1997 -

Biennial.
At head of title: BC college and institute student outcomes report.
Issued by BC Outcomes Working Group and CEISS.
ISSN 1481-7667 = BC college and institute aboriginal former student outcomes

1. Indians of North America - Education (Continuing education) - British Columbia - Evaluation - Periodicals. 2. Indians of North America - Education (Higher) - British Columbia - Evaluation - Periodicals. 3. Vocational education - British Columbia - Evaluation - Periodicals. 4. Technical education - British Columbia - Evaluation - Periodicals. 5. College graduates - Employment - British Columbia - Periodicals. I. British Columbia. Post Secondary Education Division. II. BC Outcomes Working Group. III. Centre for Education Information Standards and Services. IV. Title: BC college and institute student outcomes report. V. Title: British Columbia college and institute aboriginal former student outcomes.

E96.65.B7B73 371.829'970711'05 C99-960029-X

Table of Contents

Highlights / 5

Introduction / 9

Profile of Aboriginal Former Students / 13

What percentage of former students surveyed were Aboriginal? 13
What were the characteristics of Aboriginal former students? 13
What education did Aboriginal respondents have before enrolling in their college and institute programs? 16

Aboriginal Former Students' Experiences in College and Institute Programs / 19

Where and what did Aboriginal respondents study? 19
Why did Aboriginal former students enrol in college and institute programs? 23
How did Aboriginal respondents evaluate their educational experiences? 25

Employment and Further Education Outcomes of Aboriginal Former Students / 29

What were the employment outcomes of Aboriginal former students? 29
Did Aboriginal former students pursue further education? 35

Special Section on Finances and Services / 37

How did Aboriginal former students finance their education? 37
What levels of debt do Aboriginal respondents carry? 38
How did Aboriginal former students rate their college services and facilities? 39

Conclusion / 43

Appendices / 45

Appendix A: About the Student Outcomes Survey Project 45
Appendix B: Methodology 46
Appendix C: Numbers of Respondents from Colleges, University Colleges, and Institutes 48
Appendix D: Top Ten Occupations for 1999 and 2001 49

Highlights

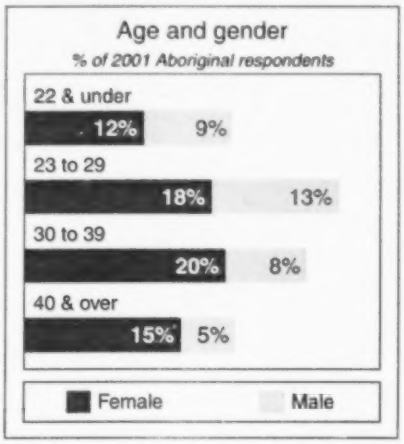
Introduction

The Ministry of Advanced Education commissioned a study to focus on education and labour market outcomes for Aboriginal former college, university college, and institute students who participated in the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey in 2001. Findings from the surveys conducted in 1995, 1997, and 1999 were used for comparison. The proportion of former students who identified themselves as Aboriginal in those surveys increased from 2.8 percent in 1995 to 4.1 percent in 2001.

Profile

What were the characteristics of Aboriginal former students?

Regardless of year, former students who identified themselves as Aboriginal were more likely to be female; in 2001, 65 percent were female. Also in 2001, the median age of Aboriginal former students was 29—for non-Aboriginal former students it was 25.



Aboriginal former students were much more likely to have children and to be single parents: in 2001, 27 percent were part of a couple with children and 21 percent were single parents, compared with 15 and 6 percent of non-Aboriginal former students respectively.

What education did Aboriginal respondents have before enrolling in their college and institute programs?

In 2001, 81 percent of Aboriginal former students said they had completed high school before enrolling in their college and institute programs; however, the percentage of non-Aboriginal respondents who reported completing high school was somewhat higher, at 94 percent.

Almost half (45 percent) of Aboriginal respondents reported taking some prior post-secondary education—56 percent of these respondents said they received a credential: a diploma, certificate, associate degree, or degree.

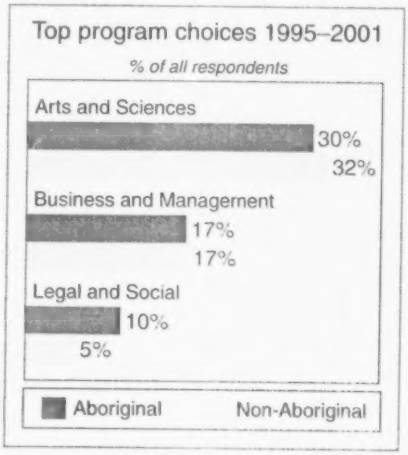
Experiences in College and Institute Programs

Where and what did Aboriginal respondents study?

Aboriginal respondents were less likely than non-Aboriginal to have been enrolled in institutions on the Lower Mainland, but more likely to have studied in the Interior and Kootenays, on Vancouver Island, and in Northern BC, where 18 percent of 2001 Aboriginal respondents reported they had studied, compared with 5 percent of other respondents.

Fifty-two percent of Aboriginal former students surveyed in 2001 attended colleges, 35 percent had been in university colleges, and 13 percent were from institutes.

Over 50 percent of all respondents were enrolled in one of three program areas: Arts and Sciences, Business and Management, and Legal and Social. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents made similar choices, except for Legal and Social programs.



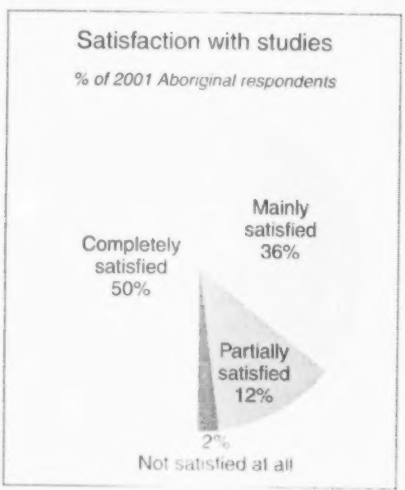
Why did Aboriginal former students enrol in college and institute programs?

Former college and institute students were most likely to have enrolled in their programs to learn or improve their job skills or decide on a career. Forty-one percent of Aboriginal respondents enrolled for job reasons, while 32 percent focussed on credential-related goals, which included completing a credential, preparing to transfer to another institution, and qualifying to enter another program. Another 22 percent of Aboriginal respondents enrolled for both job and credential. Approximately 85 percent of respondents—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—said that they met their most important objective for enrolling.

How did Aboriginal respondents evaluate their educational experiences?

In 2001, 86 percent of Aboriginal respondents said they were completely or mainly satisfied with their studies.

Aboriginal former students were more likely than non-Aboriginal to give good ratings to specific aspects of their program, such as instruction (85 versus 80 percent) and program organization (77 versus 72 percent).



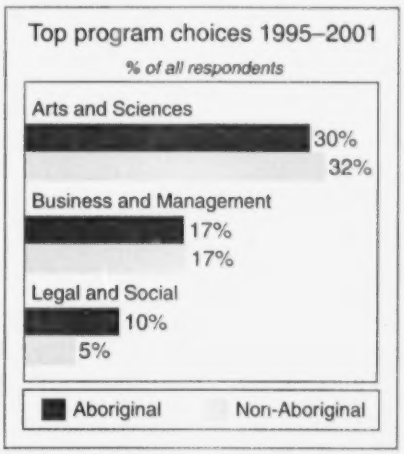
Experiences in College and Institute Programs

Where and what did Aboriginal respondents study?

Aboriginal respondents were less likely than non-Aboriginal to have been enrolled in institutions on the Lower Mainland, but more likely to have studied in the Interior and Kootenays, on Vancouver Island, and in Northern BC, where 18 percent of 2001 Aboriginal respondents reported they had studied, compared with 5 percent of other respondents.

Fifty-two percent of Aboriginal former students surveyed in 2001 attended colleges, 35 percent had been in university colleges, and 13 percent were from institutes.

Over 50 percent of all respondents were enrolled in one of three program areas: Arts and Sciences, Business and Management, and Legal and Social. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents made similar choices, except for Legal and Social programs.



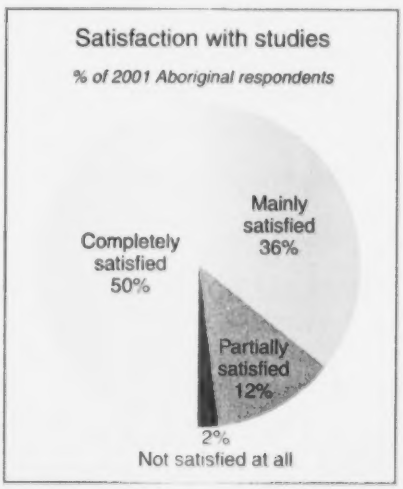
Why did Aboriginal former students enrol in college and institute programs?

Former college and institute students were most likely to have enrolled in their programs to learn or improve their job skills or decide on a career. Forty-one percent of Aboriginal respondents enrolled for job reasons, while 32 percent focussed on credential-related goals, which included completing a credential, preparing to transfer to another institution, and qualifying to enter another program. Another 22 percent of Aboriginal respondents enrolled for both job and credential. Approximately 85 percent of respondents—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—said that they met their most important objective for enrolling.

How did Aboriginal respondents evaluate their educational experiences?

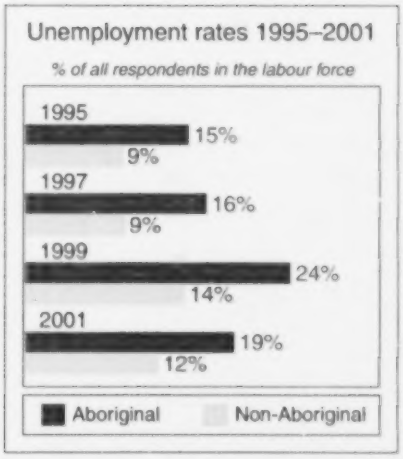
In 2001, 86 percent of Aboriginal respondents said they were completely or mainly satisfied with their studies.

Aboriginal former students were more likely than non-Aboriginal to give good ratings to specific aspects of their program, such as instruction (85 versus 80 percent) and program organization (77 versus 72 percent).



Employment and Further Education Outcomes

What were the employment outcomes of Aboriginal former students?



Since 1995, unemployment rates have been higher for Aboriginal former students; their full-time employment rates have declined and lag behind those of non-Aboriginal former students. The part-time employment rates for both groups were similar and were at their highest in 1999, when full-time rates were at their lowest.

Two-thirds of all employed respondents said their job was related to the post-secondary training they had taken—Aboriginal respondents gave higher ratings. As well, Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal to say that their education had been useful to them in performing their jobs.

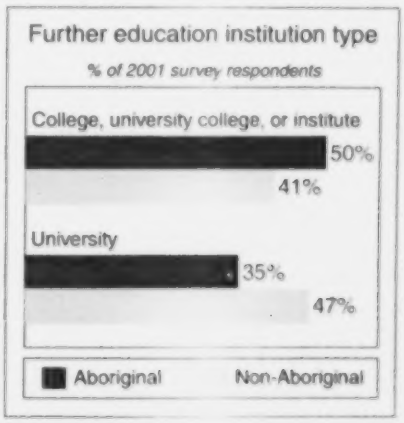
Salaries varied according to the program of study Aboriginal respondents left. In 2001, former Business and Management students had median full-time salaries of $2,360; former students from Legal and Social programs earned $2,650, and former Arts and Sciences students, earned $2,290. Overall, the full-time salaries of Aboriginal respondents from 1995 to 2001 kept pace with those of non-Aboriginal respondents.

Did Aboriginal former students pursue further education?

When surveyed in 2001, 42 percent of Aboriginal former college and institute students had taken some further education since leaving their programs. This figure rose to 64 percent for Aboriginal respondents who left Arts and Sciences programs; for Aboriginal former Business and Management students, it was 34 percent.

Aboriginal former students who continued their education were somewhat more likely to choose a college, university college, or institute than a university. This pattern is reversed for non-Aboriginal former students, who were more likely to go on to university.

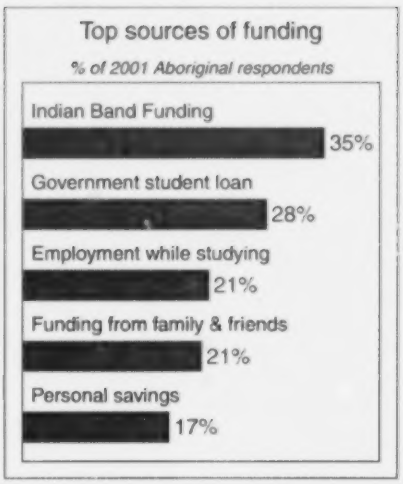
Eighty-six percent of 2001 Aboriginal respondents who went on to further education said their new studies were related to their college and institute program.



Finances and Services

How did Aboriginal former students finance their education?

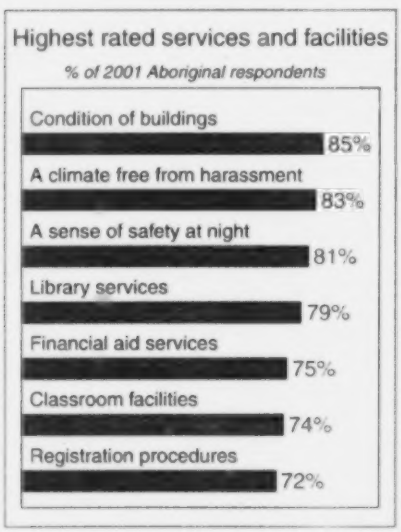
Over one-third of Aboriginal former students reported Indian Band funding as one of the top two sources of financing they used for their college and institute education. They were less likely to cite personal savings, family support, and employment income than were non-Aboriginal respondents.



What levels of debt do Aboriginal respondents carry?

Forty-three percent of Aboriginal respondents borrowed to finance their studies; 29 percent had a government student loan. The comparable figures for non-Aboriginal respondents are 45 and 30 percent respectively. The majority of Aboriginal former students who had a student loan owed $10,000 or less.

How did Aboriginal former students rate their college services and facilities?



In general, Aboriginal former students said that services at their college, university college, or institute had been good or very good; however, only 49 percent gave that rating to employment services in 2001—this figure was the same for non-Aboriginal respondents. Likewise, most Aboriginal respondents were satisfied with their institution's facilities; the lowest rated item was "places to study"—66 percent said they were good or very good.

Conclusion

The survey findings 1995 to 2001 show improvements for Aboriginal former students, although there are still challenges to be met. Aboriginal former students chose study locations and programs that were slightly different than those of their non-Aboriginal counterparts, although they completed the requirements for credentials at similar rates. They were more likely than non-Aboriginal respondents to give high ratings to their institutions' programming, services, and facilities. In spite of that, their outcomes, particularly in the area of employment, were not as good. Increasing the success rates for Aboriginal learners remains an ongoing Ministry commitment.

Introduction

Purpose

This report was commissioned by the Ministry of Advanced Education to present an analysis of education and employment outcomes of Aboriginal former students who were surveyed in 2001. As part of the analysis, outcomes data from surveys conducted in 1995, 1997, and 1999 are used for comparisons and trends. Throughout the report, Aboriginal former students are compared with the general population of former college, university college, and institute students.

In addition to a comprehensive examination of further education experiences and labour market outcomes—which includes employment rates, occupation choices, and salary comparisons—the report provides information on the characteristics of the Aboriginal former students surveyed, as well as their previous education, reasons for enrolling, the programs they took, and their evaluations of those programs. There is also a section on student finances and debt.

This is the third Aboriginal Former Student Outcomes report produced from data collected by the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey (all three reports are available at http://outcomes.ceiss.org/Publications/special.asp). This current report will be one of several tools the Ministry is using to measure outcomes for accountability purposes.

Background

The Ministry of Advanced Education envisions a province where all British Columbians have affordable access to the best possible, technologically advanced, integrated, and accountable post-secondary education system.

Population projections suggest that Aboriginal youth will represent a much larger share of the youth market over the next decade and will account for an increasing share of entrants into the work force. This emerging growth in the proportion of youth who are Aboriginal will have an impact on the demand for education and training programs in the next decades.

To address these issues, the Ministry of Advanced Education continues to develop and implement strategies to increase access, participation, retention, and success rates of Aboriginal learners at public post-secondary institutions.

More specifically, the Ministry's strategy focusses on the following key goals:

- Ensure that high quality post-secondary education programming is responsive to the needs of Aboriginal learners, is linked to labour market opportunities within Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and is sensitive to the cultures of Aboriginal people.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal people entering and completing post-secondary education to a rate at least equivalent to that of the non-Aboriginal population.
- Promote choice for Aboriginal students in location, method of delivery, and programming.
- Ensure that the provincial fiscal framework and federal-provincial cost-sharing are considered in determining the delivery modes for Aboriginal post-secondary education.
- Ensure that post-secondary education governance structures are representative and sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal people.

Data for this report

The data for this report were drawn from the 1995, 1997, 1999, and 2001 BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Surveys.[1] Former students from colleges, university colleges, and institutes were interviewed by telephone 9–20 months after completing all, or a significant portion, of their post-secondary programs. In 2001, over 30,000 former students from all 22 of the public institutions in BC's college and institute system were targeted for contact. Sixty-one percent—18,567—completed the survey.[2]

For the survey years selected, the following table shows the number of former students selected for surveying, the number that responded to the questions, and the number of respondents who identified themselves as Aboriginal.

	In survey	Respondents	Overall response rate	Aboriginal respondents
1995	26,720	19,988	75%	556
1997	27,676	18,897	68%	692
1999	28,478	14,428	51%	590
2001	30,279	18,567	61%	759

[1] See *Appendix A: About the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey Project.*
[2] For more information on the survey cohort and data analysis, see *Appendix B: Methodology.*

Aboriginal respondents were those who answered 'yes' to Question 56 of the survey: "Are you an Aboriginal person?" This survey question changed between 1997 and 1999, although it was only the secondary part of the question that was different. For 1995 and 1997 it was: *Are you an Aboriginal person (that is, a North American Indian or a member of a First Nation; or Métis; or Inuit)?* For 1999 and 2001 it was: *Are you an Aboriginal person? That is, an indigenous person of Canada, including First Nations (status or non-status) or Métis or Inuit?*

The refusal rates for this question are quite low. Of those who were asked the question in 2001, .21% refused (n=39) and in 1999 it was .25% (n=42). The refusal rate was not recorded as a separate item in the 1995 or 1997 surveys, so a comparison of the rates for the different questions cannot be done.

The percentage of respondents who identified themselves as Aboriginal has increased for 1999 and 2001—see page 13. Since there are many factors that could have contributed to that increase, it is not possible to attribute it to the change in the question.

In the text, the terms Aboriginal former students and Aboriginal respondents are used interchangeably—they both refer to those former students who responded to the survey. Please note that percentages in the text and charts are rounded and may not always add to 100. Because the numbers are rounded for chart labelling but not for chart plotting, bars or columns may have the same value label but appear to be slightly different. Please see *Appendix B: Methodology,* for more information.

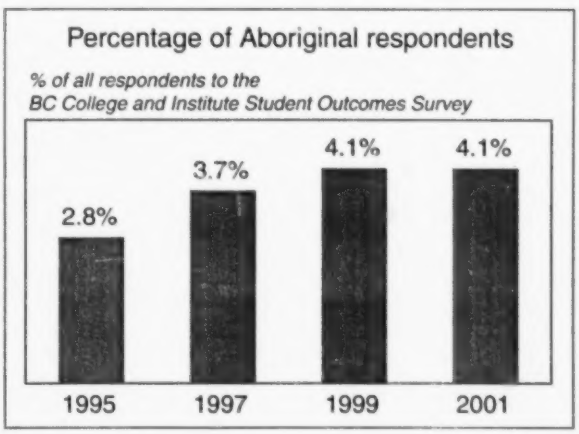
In some instances, data from the 1996 Census have been used for comparison with findings from the survey—these cases are noted. At the time of writing, 2001 census data are not available. Please see Statistics Canada (www.statcan.ca) for information on the census.

Profile of Aboriginal Former Students

What percentage of former students surveyed were Aboriginal?

Since 1995, the proportion of Aboriginal former students in the survey has increased

The proportion of Aboriginal former students in the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey increased from 1995 to 1999; in 1999 and 2001, 4.1 percent of survey respondents identified themselves as Aboriginal.



The proportion of Aboriginal former students who participated in the survey approximated the proportion of the BC population identified as Aboriginal. Data from the 1996 national census showed that the Aboriginal population of BC was 3.8 percent of the total. For those aged 15 to 44, the percentage was 4.1.[3]

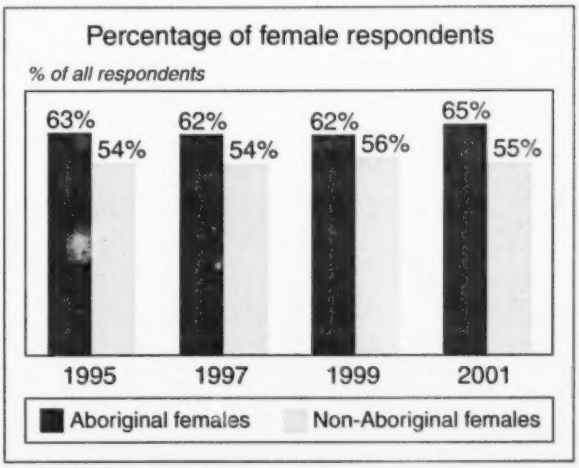
The actual participation rate of Aboriginal students in the college and institute system is not available from the survey; however, it is likely that Aboriginal students attended colleges, university colleges, and institutes at higher rates than they attended universities. In fact, census data revealed that while 41 percent of the Aboriginal population aged 15 or older attained some level of post-secondary education, only 3 percent had attained a university degree, compared with 14 percent of the non-Aboriginal population.[4]

What were the characteristics of Aboriginal former students?

Aboriginal respondents were more likely to be female

Fewer male than female respondents to the survey identified themselves as Aboriginal. In 2001, 35 percent of Aboriginal respondents were male; 65 percent were female. That year, 45 percent of non-Aboriginal former students were male, 55 percent female. These proportions have remained consistent since the 1995 student outcomes survey.

[3] Source: Statistics Canada's 1996 Census of Population and Housing
[4] Source: Statistics Canada's 1996 Census of Population and Housing

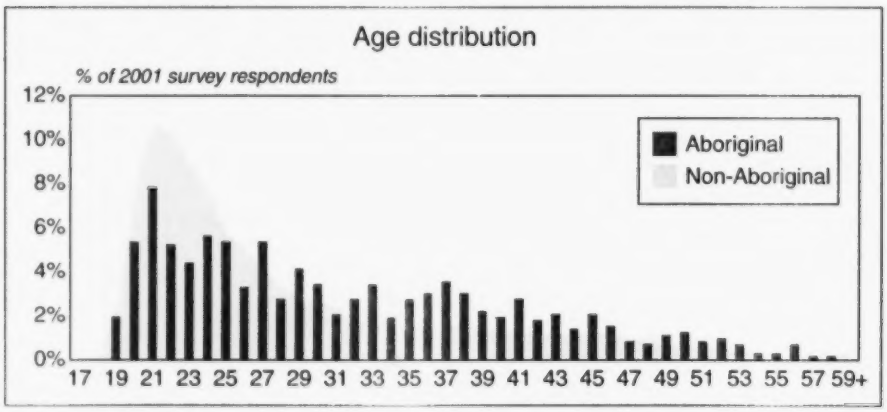


The proportion of females studying in the college and institute system is higher than the proportion of females in the population aged 15 and older. Census data show that 53 percent of the Aboriginal population aged 15 and older were female; the corresponding figure for the non-Aboriginal population was 51 percent. For 15- to 24-year-olds in the population, there is an almost equal balance of males and females; the balance changes as people age, particularly for the Aboriginal population. For those in the 25 to 44 age group, the percentage of males drops: to 46 percent for the Aboriginal population and to 49 percent in the non-Aboriginal population.[5]

On average, Aboriginal former students are older

From 1995 to 2001, Aboriginal respondents tended to be older than other respondents. In 2001, the median age of Aboriginal former students was 29, while non-Aboriginal former students had a median age of 25.

The age distribution of Aboriginal respondents is flatter than that of non-Aboriginal respondents. Percentages of Aboriginal respondents under 30 are lower and percentages over 30 are higher than those of non-Aboriginal respondents.



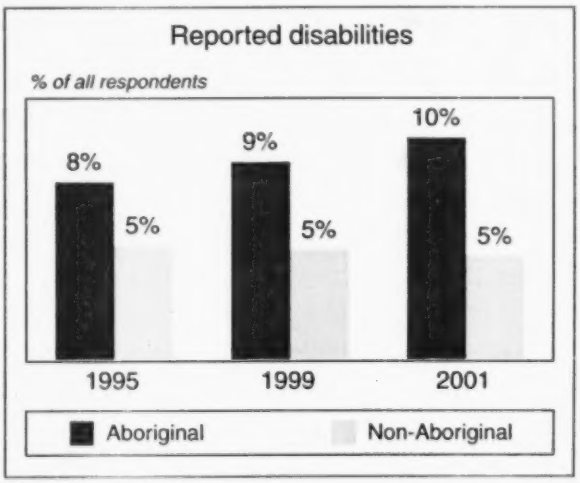
[5] Source: Statistics Canada's 1996 Census of Population and Housing

In contrast, the age distribution of the BC Aboriginal population and that of the BC non-Aboriginal population show a difference that is in the opposite direction. Of the population aged 15 and older, higher proportions of Aboriginal persons are aged 15 to 24: 26 percent, versus 16 percent of the non-Aboriginal population. The balance shifts for those 45 and older—6 percent of the Aboriginal population is in that age group compared with 43 percent of the non-Aboriginal population.[6]

Since the Aboriginal population in BC is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population, it seems that Aboriginal learners are choosing to attend post-secondary education later in life than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

The rate of reported disabilities was higher for Aboriginal former students

In 2001, Aboriginal respondents were twice as likely as non-Aboriginal respondents to report a long-term physical condition, mental condition, or health problem that limited the kind of activity they could do. A wide range of conditions were reported by these Aboriginal former students, although 42 percent had a condition that limited their mobility. Another 14 percent reported co-ordination difficulties, 8 percent suffered from depression, and 6 percent were limited by injuries.



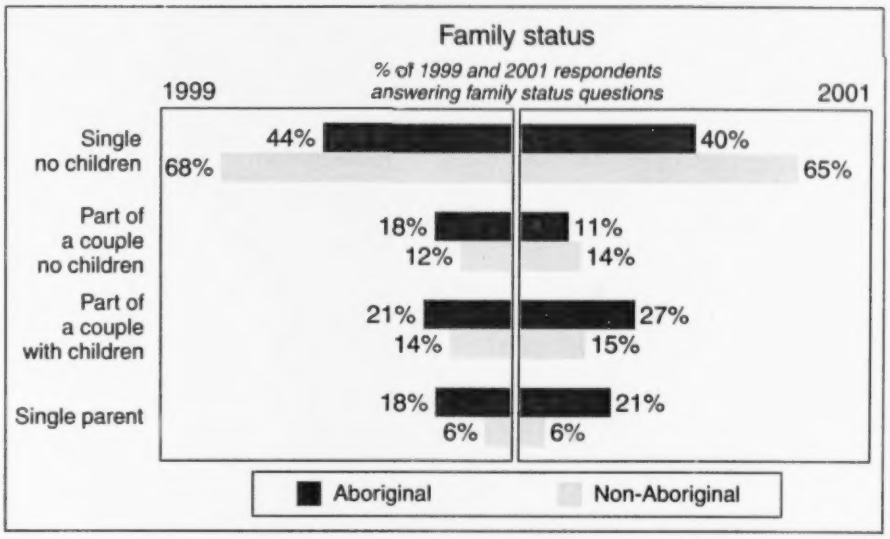
Since 1995, 5 percent of all respondents have reported disabilities every time the question has been asked—it was not asked in 1997.

Aboriginal respondents were more likely to have children

Questions on family status were not asked with every survey; however, in 1999 and 2001, a 50-percent sample of respondents were asked if they had children, and if so, how many. Aboriginal former students were much more likely to have children.

They were also likely to have more children: in 2001, 27 percent of Aboriginal respondents had three or more children, compared with 19 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents.

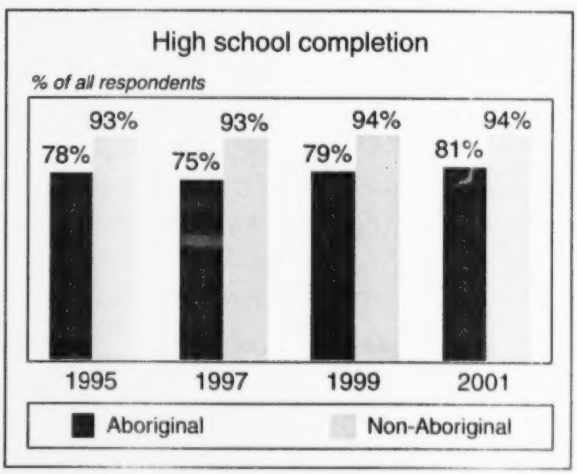
[6] Source: Statistics Canada's 1996 Census of Population and Housing



What education did Aboriginal respondents have before enrolling in their college and institute programs?

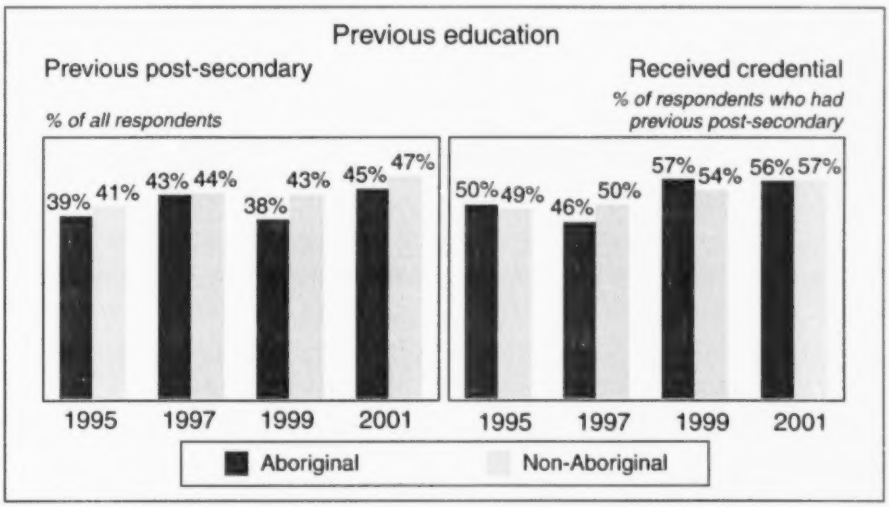
Aboriginal respondents were less likely to have completed high school

Most Aboriginal former students completed high school before enrolling in their college and institute programs; however, the percentages of Aboriginal respondents who reported completing high school were somewhat lower than those of non-Aboriginal respondents.



Two out of five Aboriginal former students reported previous post-secondary studies

Many respondents reported taking some post-secondary education before enrolling in their college and institute programs—approximately half of these respondents said they received a credential: a diploma, certificate, associate degree, or degree. Aboriginal former students reported previous post-secondary experience at almost the same rate as non-Aboriginal respondents.



When those who had taken previous post-secondary studies were asked what certificates, diplomas, or degrees they received before enrolling in the program being surveyed, a higher proportion of Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal former students reported obtaining a trades or other non-university certificate or diploma. In 2001, 15 percent of Aboriginal respondents who studied previously said they received a trades certificate or diploma, compared with 10 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents; 31 percent completed some other non-university credential, versus 24 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents.

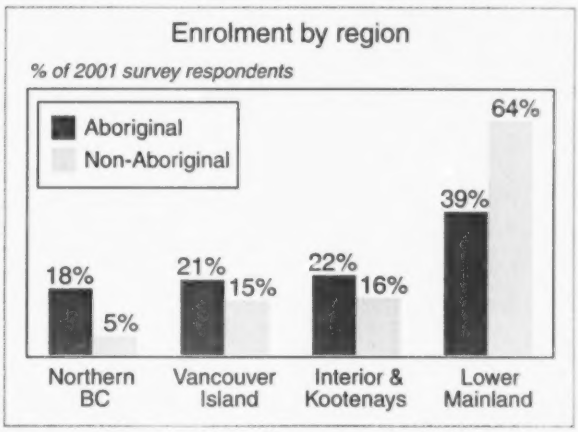
Non-Aboriginal former students who had taken prior post-secondary education were more likely to report a bachelor's degree or post-bachelor credential. Again in 2001, 17 percent of these non-Aboriginal respondents had completed a bachelor's degree, compared with 6 percent of Aboriginal respondents. A few former students had completed credentials above the level of bachelor's; this includes advanced certificates and diplomas, Master's degrees, medical degrees, and doctorates. Altogether, 3 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents who had studied at the post-secondary level had advanced credentials before enrolling in their college and institute program—2 percent of Aboriginal respondents (n=7) reported the same.

Aboriginal Former Students' Experiences in College and Institute Programs

Where and what did Aboriginal respondents study?

Aboriginal former students were more likely than other former students to have studied outside the Lower Mainland

Former students were assigned to geographic regions, based on the location of the institution they attended. Compared with non-Aboriginal respondents, higher proportions of Aboriginal respondents studied in the Interior and Kootenays, on Vancouver Island, and in Northern BC; they were less likely than all other respondents to have been enrolled in institutions on the Lower Mainland. These differences are evident across all survey years; the findings from 2001 illustrate that the distribution of Aboriginal respondents across the four regions showed less variation than did the distribution of non-Aboriginal respondents.



Higher proportions of Aboriginal respondents attended institutions in Northern BC

Looking at each region separately showed that Northern BC had the highest proportion of Aboriginal students; the percentage ranged from 7.5 to 13 percent over the period 1995 to 2001.

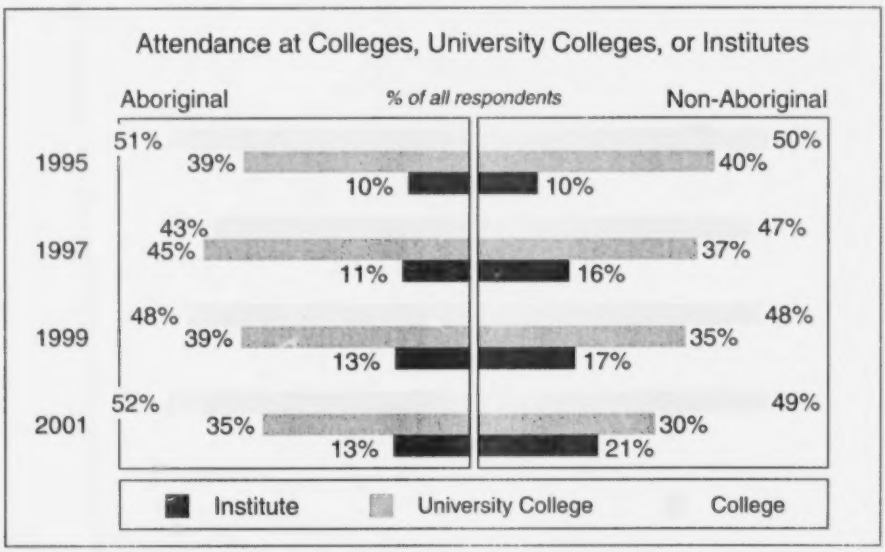
The percentage of Aboriginal respondents in each region

% of all respondents in each region

	All Regions	Interior & Kootenay	Lower Mainland	Northern BC	Vancouver Island
1995	2.8%	3.7%	1.6%	9.0%	3.1%
1997	3.7%	4.8%	2.1%	7.5%	5.6%
1999	4.1%	6.3%	2.4%	9.8%	5.6%
2001	4.1%	5.6%	2.5%	13.0%	5.6%

Aboriginal respondents were more likely to have attended university college

Approximately half of the former students surveyed attended colleges, rather than university colleges or institutes. For non-Aboriginal respondents there has been a slight shift since 1995 toward institutes and away from university colleges. Aboriginal respondents were more likely to attend university college than were non-Aboriginal respondents.

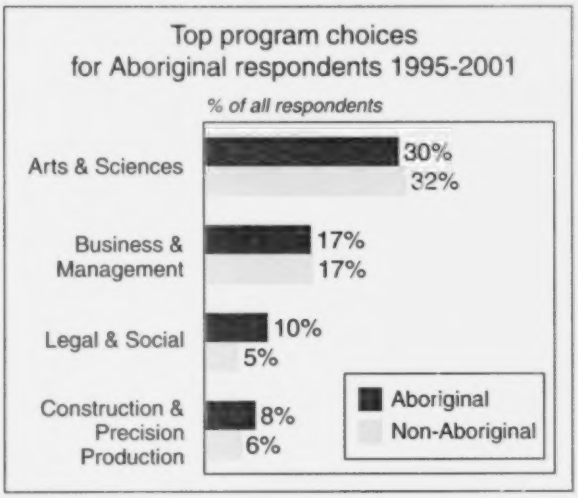


Included in the category *institutes* are Aboriginal respondents who attended one of the two Aboriginal-governed public post-secondary institutes—the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) and the Institute of Indigenous Government (IIG). These two institutes are small: in 2001, there were 10 self-identified Aboriginal respondents who had attended NVIT and 12 from IIG (combined, these former students represent 81 percent of IIG and NVIT survey respondents from that year).

The University College of the Cariboo had the highest concentration of Aboriginal respondents, 12 percent of Aboriginal former students surveyed, and Malaspina University-College was the next highest at just over 9 percent. (See Appendix C for a table showing the numbers of Aboriginal respondents from each BC college, university college, and institute.)

Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal to take legal and social programs

Overall, there were few differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents in their enrolment by broad program areas. The program area with the largest enrolment was Arts and Sciences, with 31 percent of all former students. Aboriginal respondents were somewhat more likely to take Legal and Social programs and Construction and Precision Production programs. Percentages varied a little from year-to-year, but there were no evident trends.



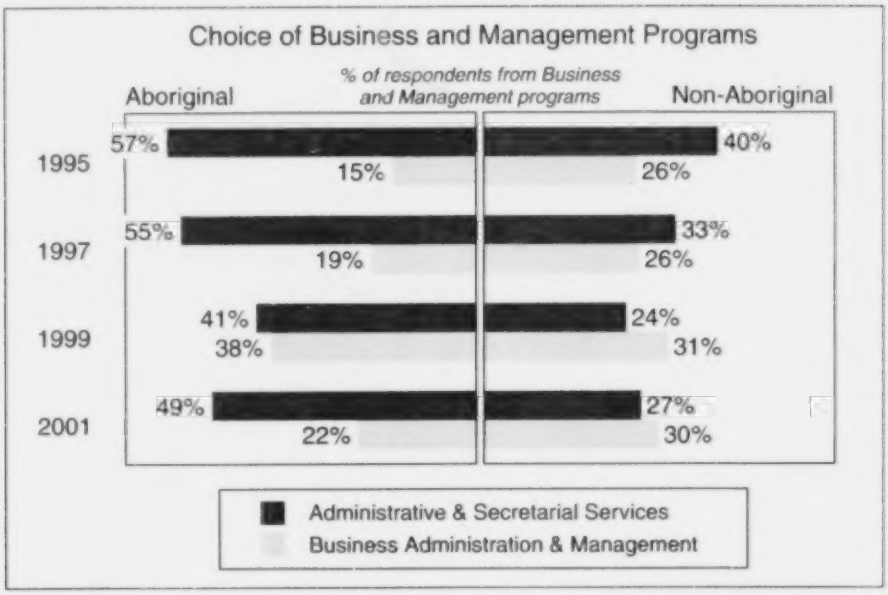
Social Work was a popular study choice for Aboriginal respondents

In 2001, the majority of Aboriginal respondents who took Legal and Social programs said they had studied Social Work—59 percent. A further 13 percent took Criminology, and 16 percent had studied Criminal Justice and Corrections. The balance of program choices was a little different for non-Aboriginal former Legal and Social students: 28 percent took Social Work, 20 percent Criminology, and 34 percent Criminal Justice and Corrections. The choices of Aboriginal respondents remained fairly consistent over time; however, for non-Aboriginal respondents there seemed to be a shift away from Social Work toward Criminal Justice and Corrections.

Half of the Aboriginal former Business and Management students took Administrative and Secretarial Services

As reported in 2001, within the program area of Business and Management, 49 percent of Aboriginal respondents had studied Administrative and Secretarial Services, 22 percent had taken Business Administration and Management, and 13 percent, Accounting. Non-Aboriginal respondents were less likely to have taken Administrative and Secretarial Services (27 percent) and more likely to have studied Business Administration and Management (30 percent). Twelve percent took accounting.

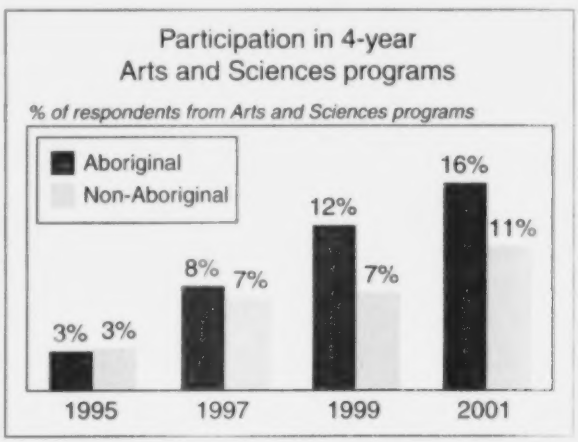
From 1995 to 1999 there was a steady decline in the percentages of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents who reported their program was Administrative and Secretarial Services and an increase in percentages of those who reported Business Administration and Management—this shift was more pronounced for Aboriginal respondents. For 2001 however, there was an apparent move away from Business Administration and Management back to Administrative and Secretarial Services, again particularly for Aboriginal respondents.



Aboriginal respondents took shorter applied programs but longer Arts and Sciences programs

Aboriginal former students tended to enrol in shorter applied programs[7] (12 months or less) and were less likely than non-Aboriginal former students to be in longer applied programs (13 to 36 months). The values for 2001 are typical: 69 percent of Aboriginal versus 53 percent non-Aboriginal respondents said they had been in shorter programs, and 27 percent versus 40 percent reported enrolment in longer programs.

The enrolment pattern for Arts and Sciences programs was the converse. While participation in 4-year academic programs has increased for all respondents since 1995, the increase has been greater for Aboriginal former students. In the later years, Aboriginal respondents were somewhat less likely than non-Aboriginal to have taken 2-year programs and significantly more likely to have been enrolled in the longer Arts and Sciences programs.



[7] "Applied" programs include all programs designed to lead to employment in a relatively specific field. They are separate from Arts and Sciences programs, which have a predominantly academic focus.

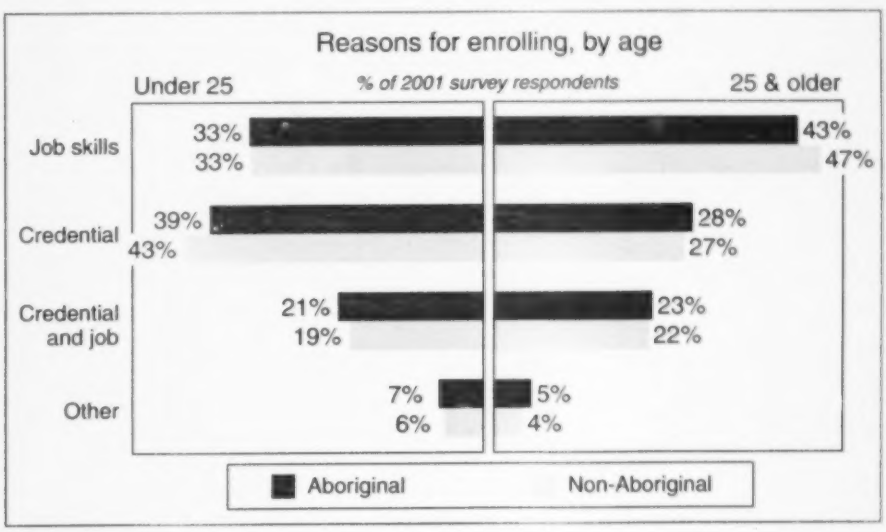
Why did Aboriginal former students enrol in college and institute programs?

Job-related reasons for enrolling were cited most often

Former college and institute students were most likely to have enrolled in their programs for job-related reasons; that is, they wanted to learn or improve their job skills or decide on a career. Credential-related goals for enrolling included completing a credential—which 38 percent of all respondents in 2001 had wanted to do—preparing to transfer to another institution, and qualifying to enter another program. While the balance between credential- and job-related goals for enrolling varied somewhat year-to-year, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents did not vary much from each other.

Older respondents were more likely than younger to want job skills

Former students who were 25 and older were more likely than younger respondents to enrol for the sake of job skills and a career and less likely to cite credential-related goals. This effect is more pronounced for non-Aboriginal respondents.

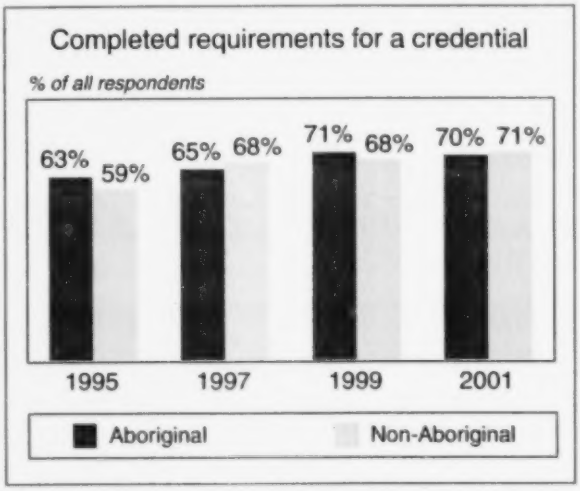


Most respondents met their main objective for enrolling

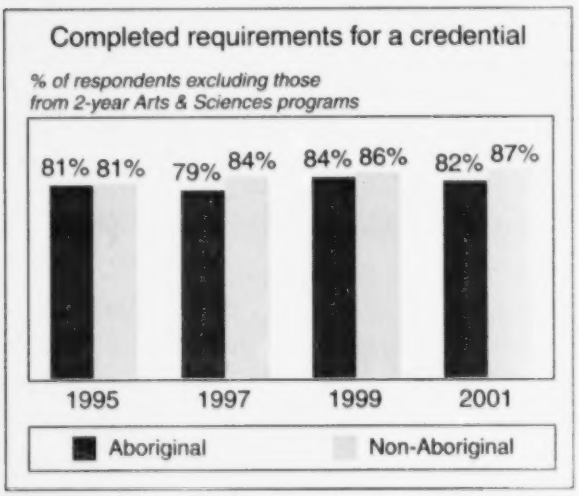
Approximately 85 percent of respondents—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—said that they "mostly" or "completely met" their most important objective for enrolling in their college and institute programs. For each survey year, whether former students said their goals at the time of enrolling were credential- or job-related, the results were similar. In the 2001 survey, 86 percent of Aboriginal respondents who had credential-related reasons or job-related reasons for enrolling said they met their goal. The corresponding figure for non-Aboriginal respondents was also 86 percent.

The majority of former students completed the requirements for a credential

Former students were asked if they had completed the requirements for a credential (certificate, diploma, or degree) when they left their college and institute programs; the majority of former students said yes.[8] The percentages of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents who completed a credential have increased somewhat since 1995; there were no significant differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents.



Former students who had enrolled in Arts and Sciences 2-year programs were much less likely to complete the requirements for a credential than respondents from other programs—in 2001, 26 percent of former Arts and Sciences students completed a credential. For the most part, respondents from these 2-year programs were more likely to say their objective for enrolling had been to qualify to transfer to another institution rather than to get a credential, and in fact, these respondents were more likely to continue their education. When they were excluded from the calculation of credential completion, the rates rose significantly.

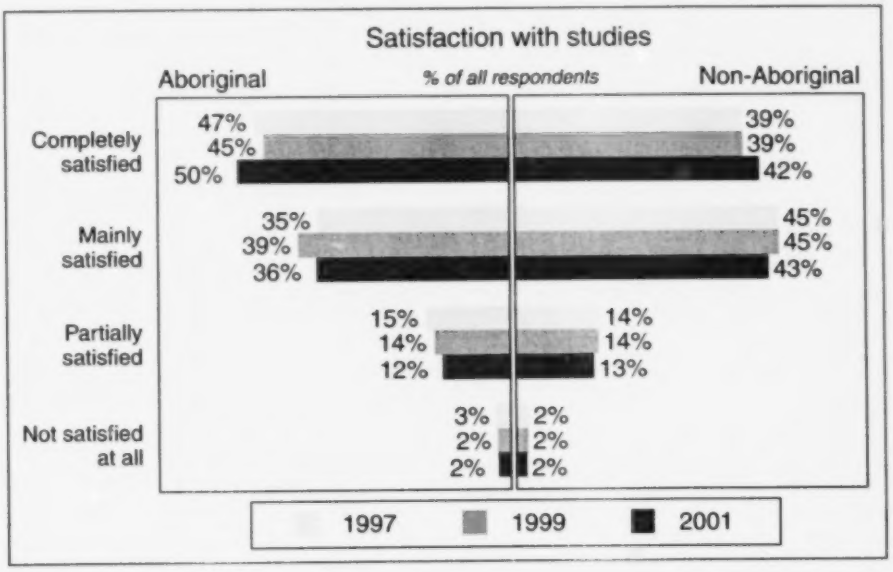


[8] To be included in the survey, former students must have completed a significant portion—not necessarily all—of their program. *Appendix B: Methodology* describes how former students are chosen for surveying.

How did Aboriginal respondents evaluate their educational experiences?

The majority of former students surveyed were satisfied with their studies

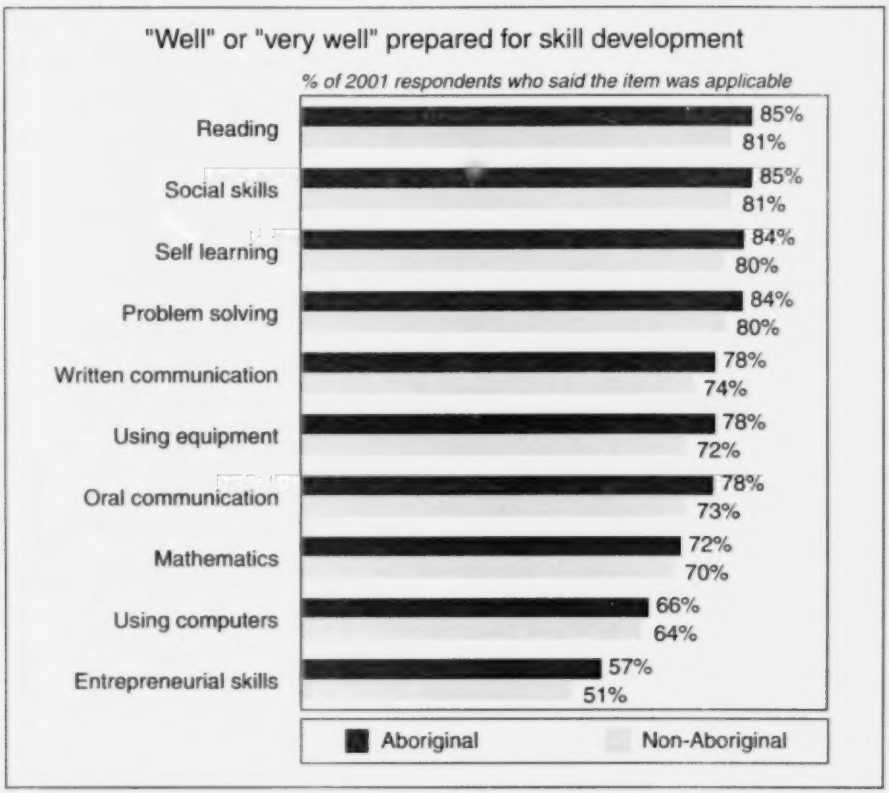
The former students surveyed report high levels of satisfaction with their program studies—from 1997 to 2001, 82 to 86 percent of Aboriginal respondents said they were either "completely" or "mainly satisfied."



Aboriginal respondents gave slightly higher ratings to skill development

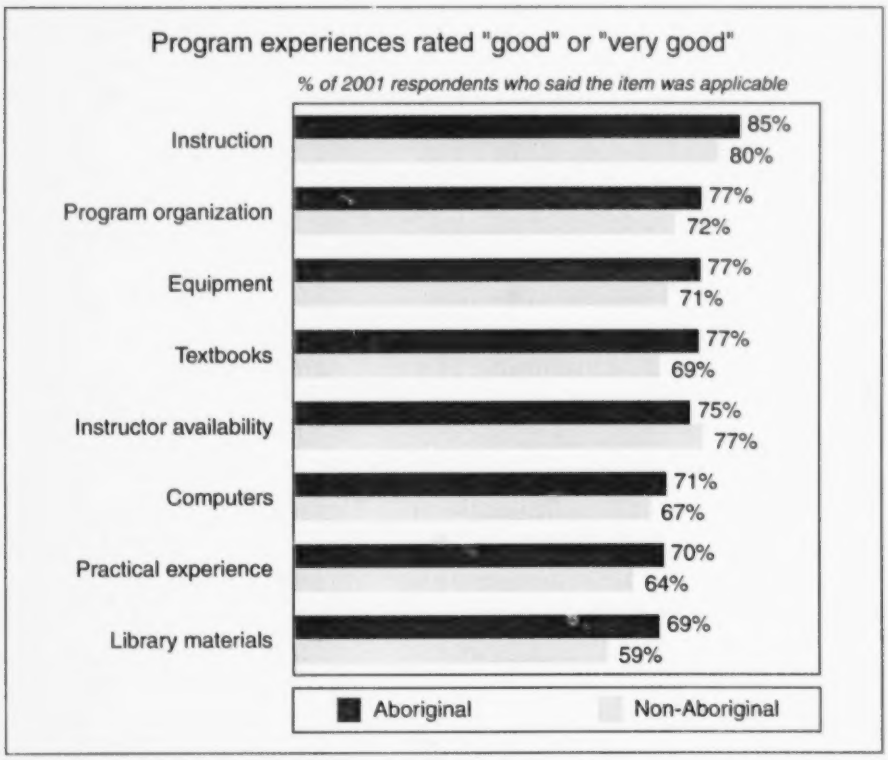
Former students were asked to rate the extent to which their programs had provided them with opportunities to develop certain skills. In every year a majority said they had been "well' or "very well" prepared by their program to develop skills, such as reading, problem solving, and oral communication. Aboriginal respondents were more likely to give higher ratings, although virtually all items were ranked the same by non-Aboriginal respondents.

In 1995 and 1997, a 3-point scale was used on the survey question, but in 1999 and 2001, it had been changed to a 5-point scale. The following chart shows data from 2001 only; the 1999 responses are very similar. Those who said an item was not applicable were not included in the calculation of percentages. The percentages of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents who said items were not applicable to their studies were the same for almost all items; the exceptions were oral and written communications. Aboriginal respondents were more likely to consider communications applicable: 14 percent said "speaking effectively" was not applicable versus 19 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents; 12 percent said "writing clearly" was not applicable versus 18 percent of non-Aboriginal respondents.



Aboriginal respondents were more likely to say their college experiences had been good or very good

Former students were also asked to rate certain aspects of their college experience, such as the quality of instruction, the amount of practical experience provided, and the quality of computers used in their program. Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal to say their college experiences were "good" or "very good"—with one exception. Instructor availability received a higher rating from non-Aboriginal respondents, and although the difference is slight, it has persisted across all survey years examined.



Aboriginal respondents offered suggestions for improving their programs

All former students surveyed were asked if the education or training they received in their program could be improved. Many respondents took the opportunity to describe specific problems they had had, but many others offered general comments. In 2001, almost one-third of the Aboriginal former students who responded to this question mentioned the instructors and class size, frequently to say that classes should be smaller and more time with instructors was needed.

> *There should be more one-on-one instruction time with the teachers, and smaller classes.*
>
> *... The classes were too big. The instructors weren't able to teach enough material in each class, as there were so many people with different learning abilities. With smaller classes, instructors could teach more material. There would be more individual attention and time to learn.*

Another area for frequent comment was that of practical or hands-on experience, and many Aboriginal respondents wanted more practicums or co-ops in their program.

> *The program could be improved by providing more job experience and teaching more practical skills, perhaps by offering a co-op program.*
>
> *I think that you have to have a practicum or some work experience. It would have been an asset to get some real hands-on experience. Jobs can be overwhelming.*

At least 20 percent of the Aboriginal respondents who answered the question had no suggestions for improvement—they said they had had no problems or the program had been good or excellent.

> *I thought it was pretty good.*
>
> *I think it was just excellent overall.*
>
> *As far as I am concerned, it was just perfect. There was little room for improvement. The instructors were great and the program was very good.*

Some Aboriginal respondents felt the need for greater focus on First Nations issues

There were a few comments that addressed a lack of cultural sensitivity and the need for a First Nations' focus in the classroom.

> *I think that a lot of the issues that First Nations students want to learn about or study are not available at the college.*
>
> *I feel the program should use more First Nations instructors and keep more abreast of their issues.*
>
> *I think it would be better fitting if they had a First Nations teacher teaching the First Nations literature class.*

Employment and Further Education Outcomes of Aboriginal Former Students

What were the employment outcomes of Aboriginal former students?

Participation in the labour force has increased for Aboriginal former students

Aboriginal former students were somewhat less likely to be in the labour force than non-Aboriginal respondents, although their participation rate had increased since 1995, and by 2001, the difference was insignificant. (The labour force includes those who were employed and those who were looking for employment.)

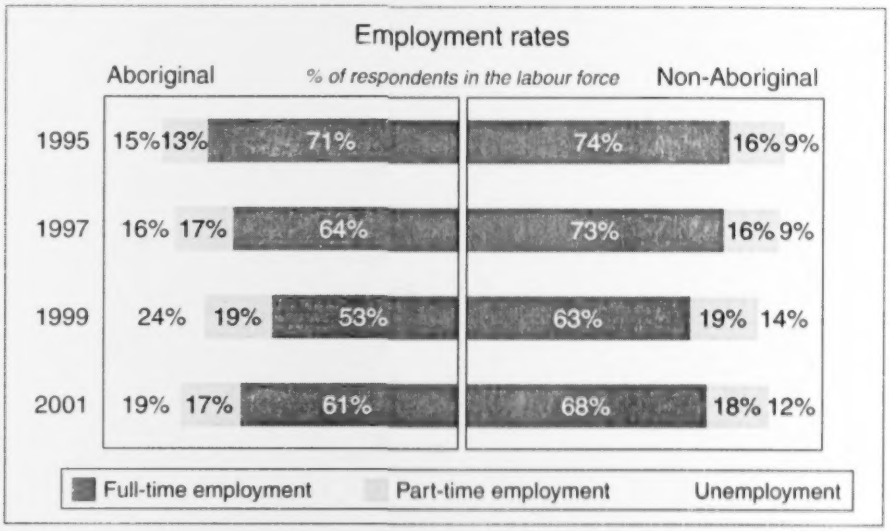
Unemployment rates for Aboriginal respondents have been higher since 1995

Unemployment rates,[9] which peaked in 1999, have been consistently higher for Aboriginal former students. Since 1995, unemployment has increased for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents alike, although 2001 showed some improvement.

The full-time employment rate for all former students declined between 1995 and 1999—the decline was more pronounced for Aboriginal former students. In 2001, both rates came up; again the effect was greater for Aboriginal respondents, although this time it was positive. The part-time employment rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students were similar, and both were at their highest in 1999, when full-time rates were at their lowest.

The rate of self-employment has decreased since 1995 as well, for all respondents. The self-employment rates for Aboriginal respondents ranged from a high of 11 percent in 1995 to 6 percent in 2001; the range for non-Aboriginal respondents was 8 percent to 6 percent for the same years.

[9] The unemployment rates were calculated as percentages of respondents in the labour force.

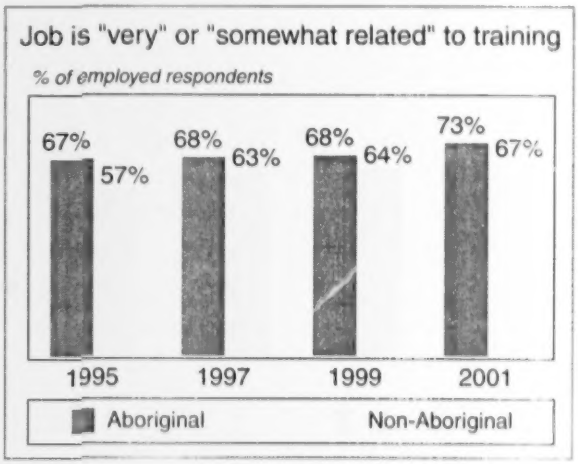


Aboriginal respondents looking for work were more likely than non-Aboriginal to say they couldn't find work

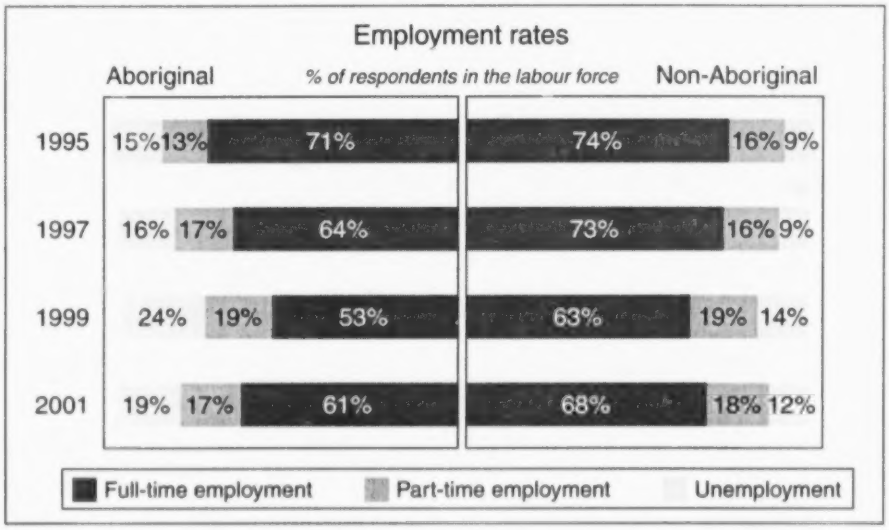
Former students who were looking for work were most likely to say they "couldn't find a job" or they were "attending school" as reasons they were not working at the time of the survey. In 2001, 30 percent of Aboriginal respondents who were looking for work said they couldn't find a job, and 23 percent said they were in school. The comparable figures for non-Aboriginal respondents are 24 and 36 percent respectively.

The majority of employed Aboriginal former students said their job was related to the training they took

Employed respondents were asked how related their job was to the training they had taken—overall, a higher percentage of Aboriginal respondents said their job was "very" or "somewhat related" to their post-secondary training.



In 2001, 81 percent of Aboriginal former Business and Management students said their job was related to their training, compared with 77 percent of non-Aboriginal former students from those programs. Arts and Sciences programs do not receive high ratings for training relatedness; however, Aboriginal respondents

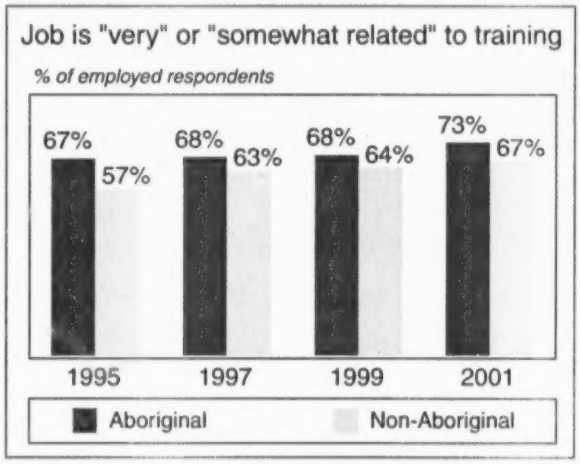


Aboriginal respondents looking for work were more likely than non-Aboriginal to say they couldn't find work

Former students who were looking for work were most likely to say they "couldn't find a job" or they were "attending school" as reasons they were not working at the time of the survey. In 2001, 30 percent of Aboriginal respondents who were looking for work said they couldn't find a job, and 23 percent said they were in school. The comparable figures for non-Aboriginal respondents are 24 and 36 percent respectively.

The majority of employed Aboriginal former students said their job was related to the training they took

Employed respondents were asked how related their job was to the training they had taken—overall, a higher percentage of Aboriginal respondents said their job was "very" or "somewhat related" to their post-secondary training.

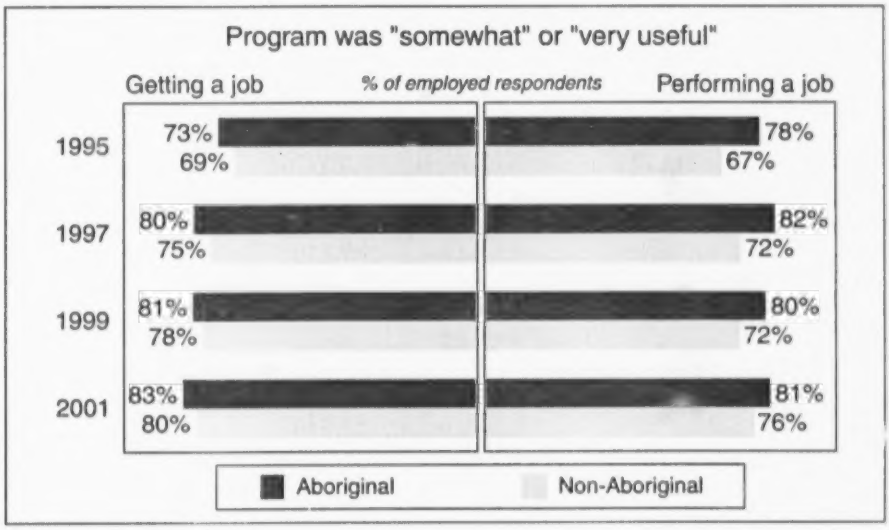


In 2001, 81 percent of Aboriginal former Business and Management students said their job was related to their training, compared with 77 percent of non-Aboriginal former students from those programs. Arts and Sciences programs do not receive high ratings for training relatedness; however, Aboriginal respondents

from these programs were more likely than non-Aboriginal respondents to say their jobs were "very" or "somewhat related" to their college and institute training (51 versus 28 percent).

Aboriginal former students were more likely to say their education helped them perform their job

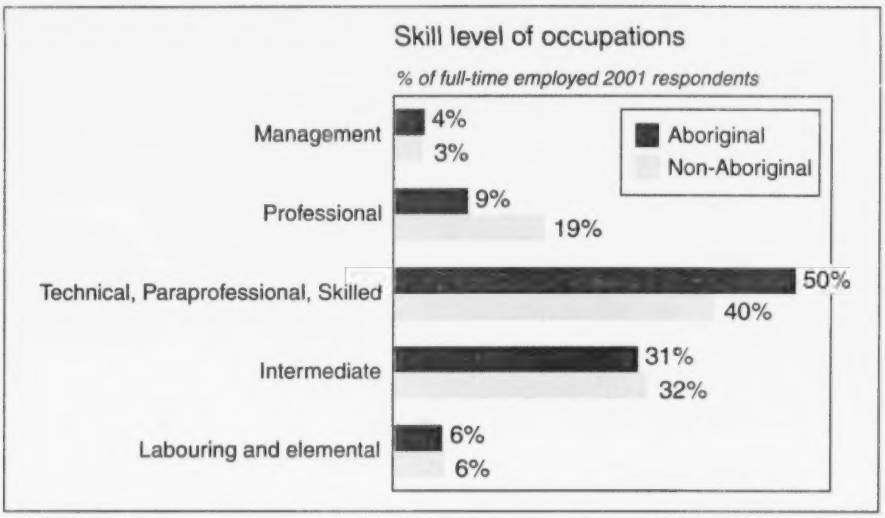
A majority of employed former students felt that their educational program had helped them get a job and was useful to them in the performance of their job. In particular, Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal to say that their education had been "somewhat" or "very useful" to them in performing their jobs.



Aboriginal respondents were most likely to be employed in professions that require some post-secondary education

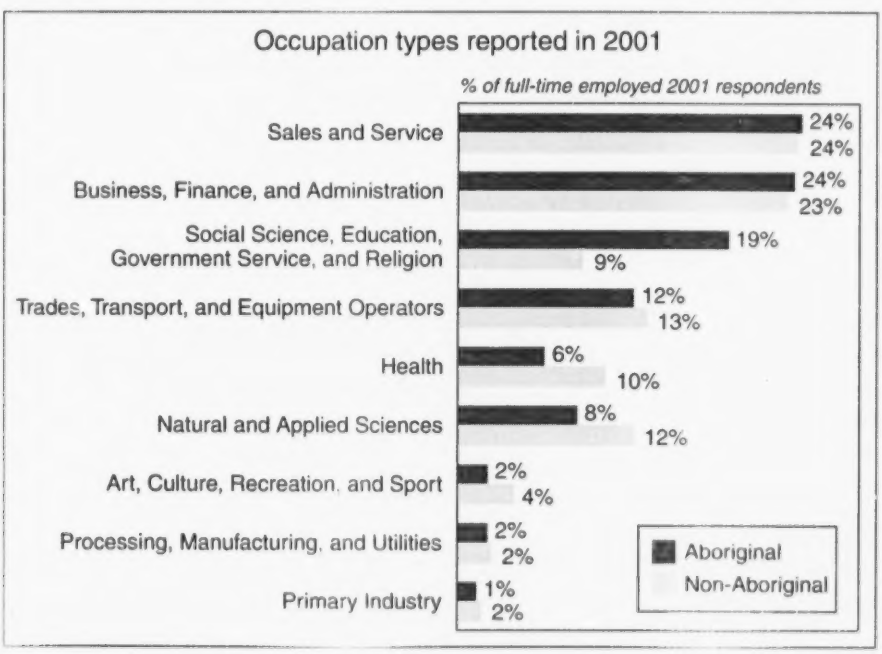
The National Occupational Classification system was used to classify the occupations of employed former students. Each occupation was given a skill level and an occupation type. The skill level is based on the amount and nature of education normally required to enter and perform the duties of that occupation. The occupation type is a broad category defined by the type of work performed.

In 2001, there were some differences in the skill level of occupations cited by full-time employed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students. Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal to be employed in Technical, Paraprofessional, and Skilled occupations, which require some post-secondary education or training. Non-Aboriginal respondents were more likely than Aboriginal to have Professional jobs, which require a university degree.



Aboriginal former students were more likely than non-Aboriginal to be employed in social science occupations

Sales and Service occupations were held by the largest percentage of all former students surveyed in 2001: 24 percent of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal full-time employed respondents had this type of job. Business, Finance, and Administration occupations were a close second at 23 percent of all respondents. Other reported employment choices were similar for both groups, except that Aboriginal respondents were more likely than non-Aboriginal to be in occupations related to social science and government service, while non-Aboriginal respondents were somewhat more likely to choose science and health occupations.



More Aboriginal respondents were employed as Community and Social Service workers than as workers in any other single occupation

Most common occupations

% of full-time employed Aboriginal respondents, 2001

Community & Social Service Workers	10%
Cooks	5%
Retail Salespersons	4%
General Office Clerks	3%
Accounting & Related Clerks	3%
Nurse Aides & Orderlies	3%

In 2001, the most common occupations reported by Aboriginal former students who were employed full-time were Community and Social Service workers. (Please see Appendix D for a list of the most frequently reported occupations for 1999 and 2001 respondents.)

The salaries of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal former students were not significantly different

Overall, the full-time salaries of Aboriginal respondents from 1995 to 2001 appeared to have kept pace with those of non-Aboriginal respondents—based on a comparison of the median gross monthly salaries for full-time employees.

Median gross monthly full-time salaries

% of full-time employed respondents, 2001

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
1995	$2,010	$2,080
1997	$2,250	$2,200
1999	$2,320	$2,390
2001	$2,500	$2,600

Note: If a respondent has more than one job, the salary cited is for the main job.

Part-time salaries—for respondents working less than 30 hours per week—seemed to be somewhat higher for Aboriginal respondents, although the differences were not statistically significant.[10] For 2001, monthly median part-time salaries were $1,040 (Aboriginal) and $870 (non-Aboriginal); for 1999, they were $1,090 and $830 respectively.

Respondents employed in sales and services occupations tended to earn less money

Former students employed in sales and service occupations—which comprised the largest proportion of employed respondents—were likely to have lower full-time median salaries than those in other occupations: $2,000 for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents, as reported in 2001. Former students working in Health occupations had significantly higher salaries: $3,270 and $3,330 respectively.[11]

Salaries of former students varied according to the program they left

Salaries also varied according to the program of study respondents left. For example, in 2001, former Business and Management students had median full-time salaries of $2,360 (Aboriginal) and $2,520 (non-Aboriginal); former students from Legal and Social programs earned $2,650 and $2,920; and respondents who took Recreation, Tourism, Hospitality, and Service programs made $1,980 and $2,000. Former Arts and Sciences students were also on the lower end of the scale, at

[10] Please see *Appendix B: Methodology*, under Analysis, for an explanation of *statistical significance*.
[11] Salary figures are for full-time main jobs.

$2,290 (Aboriginal) and $2,080 (non-Aboriginal). Respondents who completed Computer and Information Services programs had the highest reported median salary in 2001—$3,330—but there were only 6 Aboriginal respondents in that group.[12]

The percentage of employed respondents who continue their studies increased over time

Many employed former students pursued further education while they worked. Since 1995, the percentage of Aboriginal respondents who worked and studied increased from 7 percent to 18 percent; the corresponding figures for non-Aboriginal former students were 13 and 24 percent.

Current activity at the time of the survey, 1995–2001

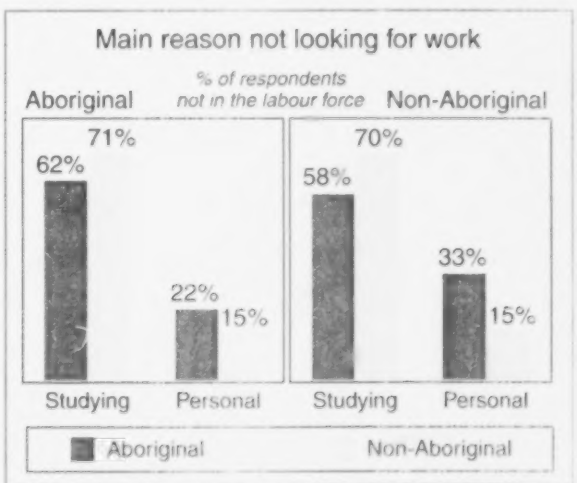
% of all respondents

	Studying & working		Studying & not working	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
1995	7%	13%	9%	9%
1997	16%	22%	12%	11%
1999	17%	23%	17%	16%
2001	18%	24%	15%	15%

	Working & not studying		Not working & not studying	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
1995	61%	65%	23%	13%
1997	52%	57%	21%	10%
1999	46%	51%	19%	10%
2001	51%	53%	15%	9%

Personal and family reasons were more likely to keep Aboriginal respondents from looking for a job

Former students who were not in the labour force were asked why they were not looking for a job. The majority said it was because they were studying; however, Aboriginal respondents were more likely than other respondents to say they had personal or family reasons for not looking for a job.



[12] Salary figures are for full-time main jobs.

$2,290 (Aboriginal) and $2,080 (non-Aboriginal). Respondents who completed Computer and Information Services programs had the highest reported median salary in 2001—$3,330—but there were only 6 Aboriginal respondents in that group.[12]

The percentage of employed respondents who continue their studies increased over time

Many employed former students pursued further education while they worked. Since 1995, the percentage of Aboriginal respondents who worked and studied increased from 7 percent to 18 percent; the corresponding figures for non-Aboriginal former students were 13 and 24 percent.

Current activity at the time of the survey, 1995–2001

% of all respondents

	Studying & working		Studying & not working	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
1995	7%	13%	9%	9%
1997	16%	22%	12%	11%
1999	17%	23%	17%	16%
2001	18%	24%	15%	15%

	Working & not studying		Not working & not studying	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
1995	61%	65%	23%	13%
1997	52%	57%	21%	10%
1999	46%	51%	19%	10%
2001	51%	53%	15%	9%

Personal and family reasons were more likely to keep Aboriginal respondents from looking for a job

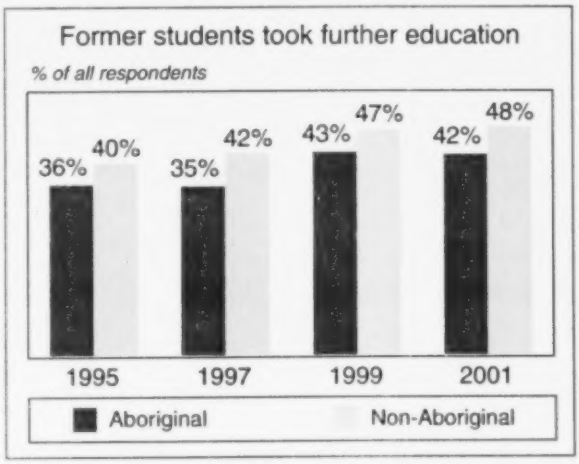
Former students who were not in the labour force were asked why they were not looking for a job. The majority said it was because they were studying; however, Aboriginal respondents were more likely than other respondents to say they had personal or family reasons for not looking for a job.

[12] Salary figures are for full-time main jobs.

Did Aboriginal former students pursue further education?

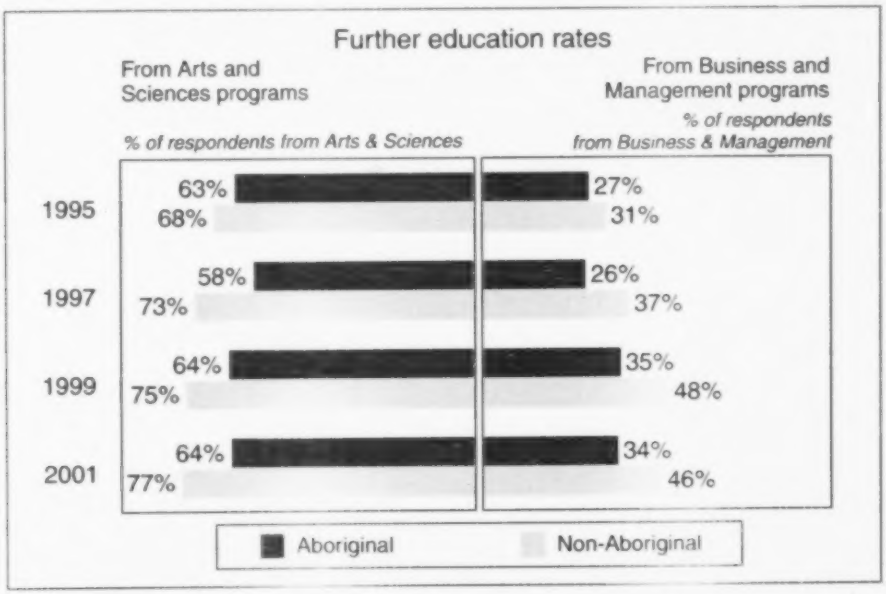
Aboriginal respondents were somewhat less likely to continue their education

At the time of the 2001 survey, 34 percent of Aboriginal former college and institute students were studying, compared with 39 percent of non-Aboriginal former students. When those who had taken further education any time since leaving their programs were included, the figures rose to 42 and 48 percent, respectively. Over time, there have been slight increases in further education participation rates for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents.



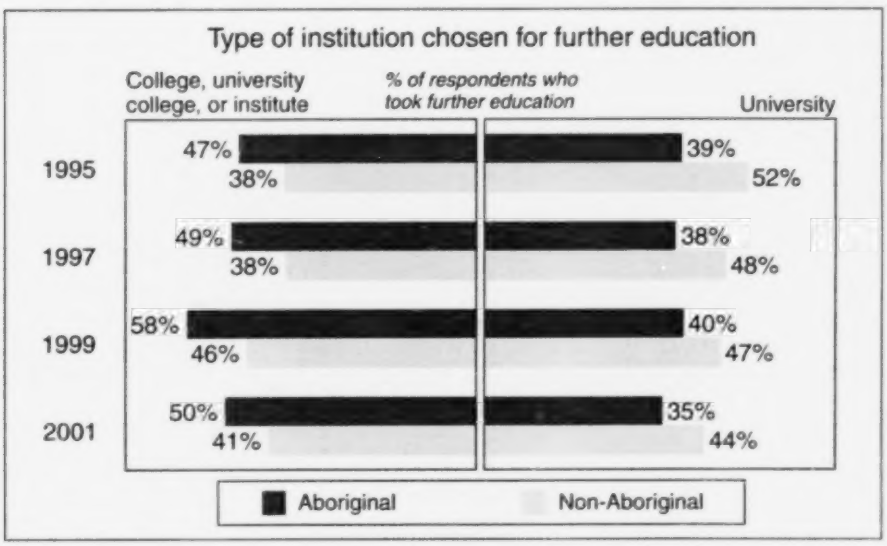
Aboriginal respondents who took Arts and Sciences were more likely to continue their education than those who took other programs

Former students from Arts and Sciences programs went on to further studies at higher rates than former students from other programs: in 2001, 64 percent of Aboriginal former Arts and Sciences students had taken further studies. The next highest participation rates in further studies were from former Business and Management students.



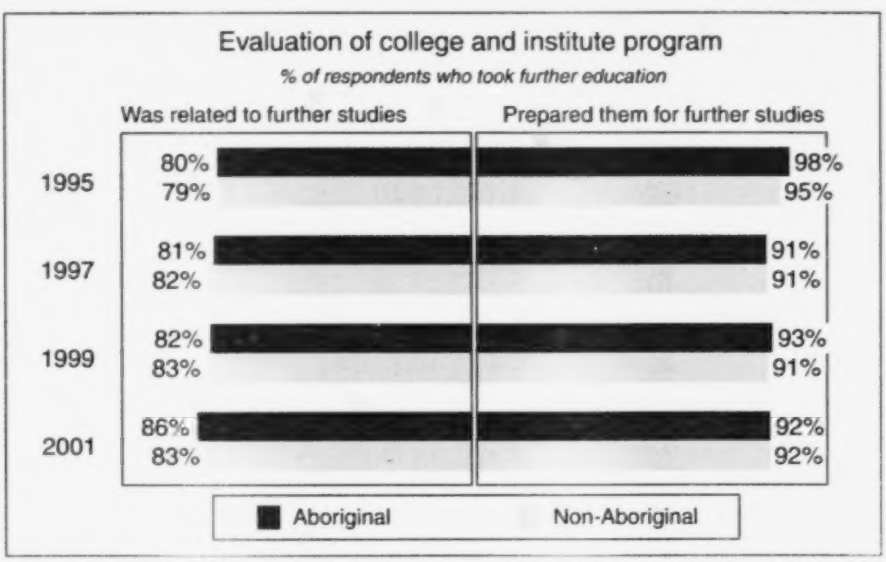
Aboriginal respondents are less likely to choose university

Aboriginal former students who continued their education were somewhat more likely to choose a college, university college, or institute than a university. This pattern is reversed for non-Aboriginal former students, who were more likely to go on to university. A much smaller number of respondents (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) go on to attend private schools or take professional training—in 2001, 6 percent of respondents overall chose one of those options.



Most former students felt they were prepared for further studies

Respondents who went on to further education were asked if their studies were related to their college and institute program; a large majority said they were "very" or "somewhat related." Almost all former students said they were "very well" or "somewhat prepared" for further studies by their college and institute program.

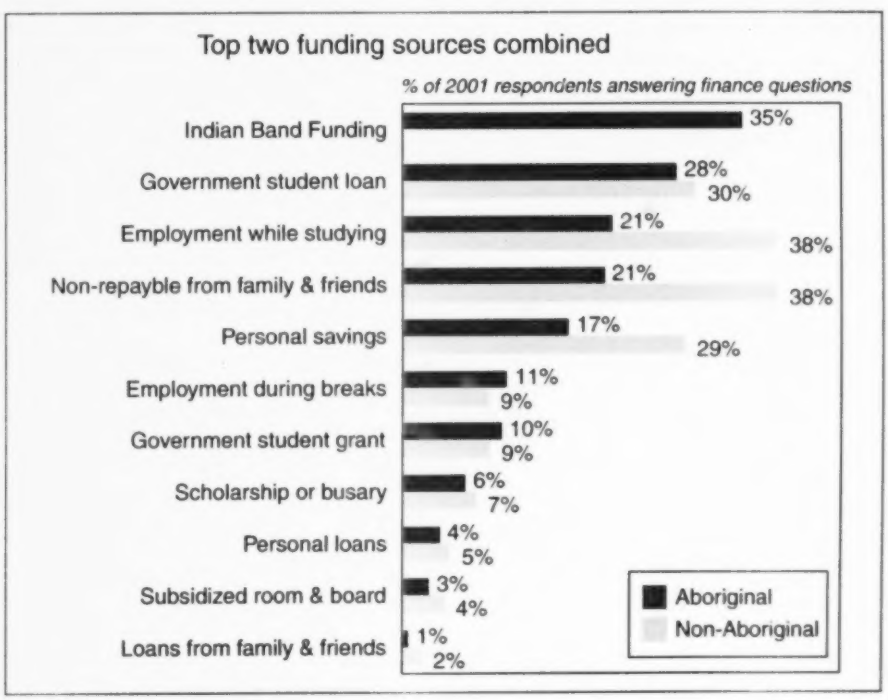


Special Section on Finances and Services

How did Aboriginal former students finance their education?

Band funding was a top source of financial support for Aboriginal respondents

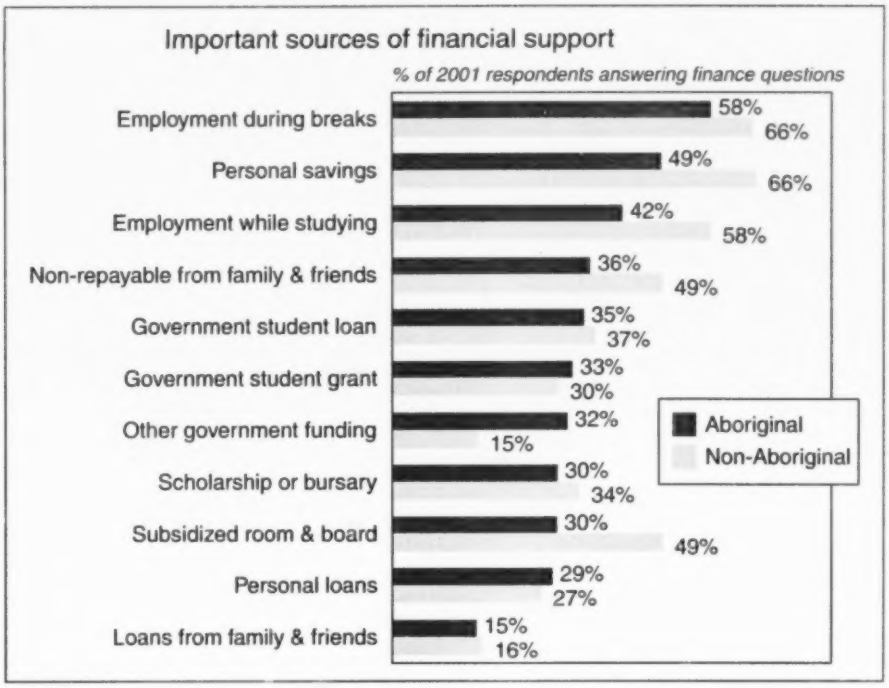
In the 2001 survey, former students[13] were asked to report the top two sources of funding they used for their college, university college, and institute education. Aboriginal respondents were less likely to cite personal savings, family support, and employment income than were non-Aboriginal respondents; however, a substantial number of Aboriginal respondents said they received Indian Band Funding.



Aboriginal respondents were less likely to say personal savings or family support were important sources of funding

In addition to their top sources of funding, former students were asked to name all the sources of financial support that were important to them during their studies. Again, Aboriginal respondents were less likely to cite employment, personal savings, and family support; however, they were twice as likely as non-Aboriginal respondents to mention "other government funding," which could include such things as employment insurance, income assistance, or disability pension.

[13] In the 2001 survey, approximately 50 percent of respondents answered a series of questions about how they financed their studies. For more information on student finances, see *How Former Students Financed Their College, University College, and Institute Programs: Special Report on Student Finances from the 2001 BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey*, available at http://outcomes.ceiss.org/Publications/

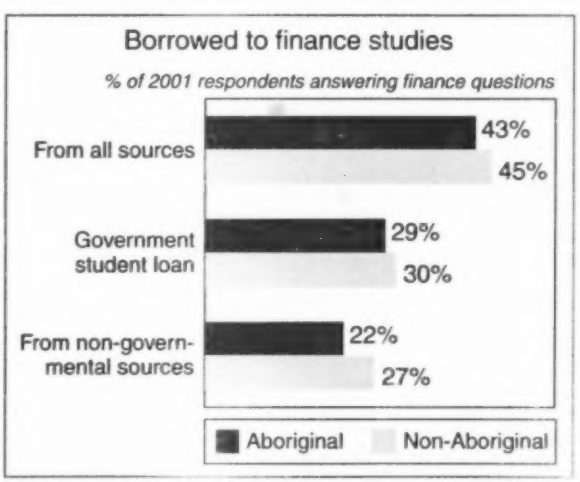


What levels of debt do Aboriginal respondents carry?

The debt amounts carried by Aboriginal respondents are similar to that carried by other respondents

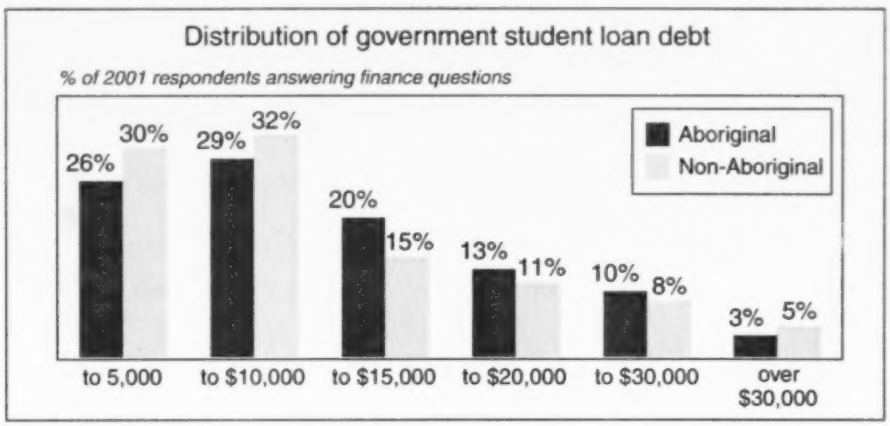
Former students surveyed were asked to report the amount of government student loans they received and any amounts they borrowed from other sources, while they took their college, university college, or institute program. Other sources could include personal loans, loans from family and friends, or credit cards.

Aboriginal former students' median debt from all sources is not significantly different from that of non-Aboriginal respondents, although it appears lower ($6,500 versus $7,000 for non-Aboriginal respondents). Their rates of borrowing appear lower, as well, although the only significant difference is the rate at which they borrow from non-governmental sources.



Less than half of the Aboriginal former students who had a government student loan owed more than $10,000

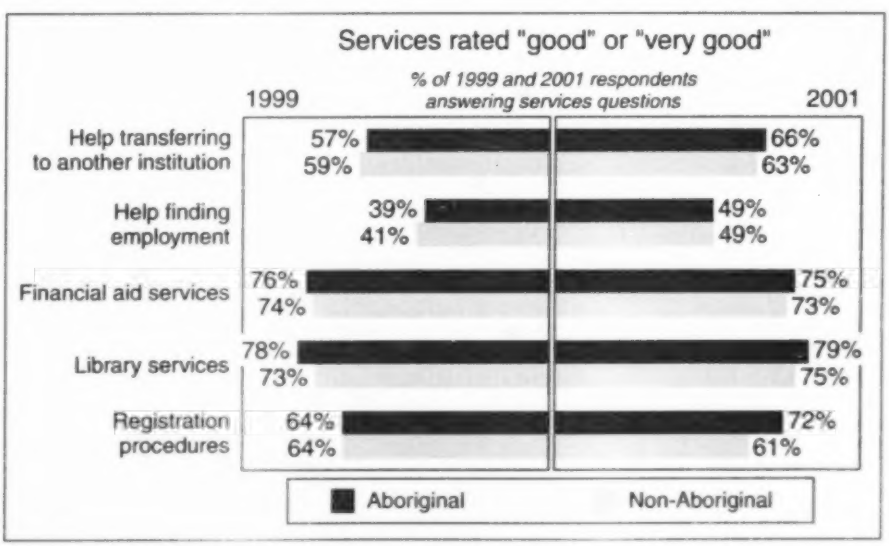
The majority of former students with government student loan debt owed $10,000 or less: 54 percent of Aboriginal respondents and 62 percent of non-Aboriginal students were in this category.



How did Aboriginal former students rate their college services and facilities?

The majority of Aboriginal respondents felt most services were good

The 1999 and 2001 surveys asked respondents[14] to rate some of the services and facilities at the institution or campus they attended. In general, a majority of former students said that specified services had been "good" or "very good"; the lowest ratings were given to employment services or "help finding employment when you left your program."



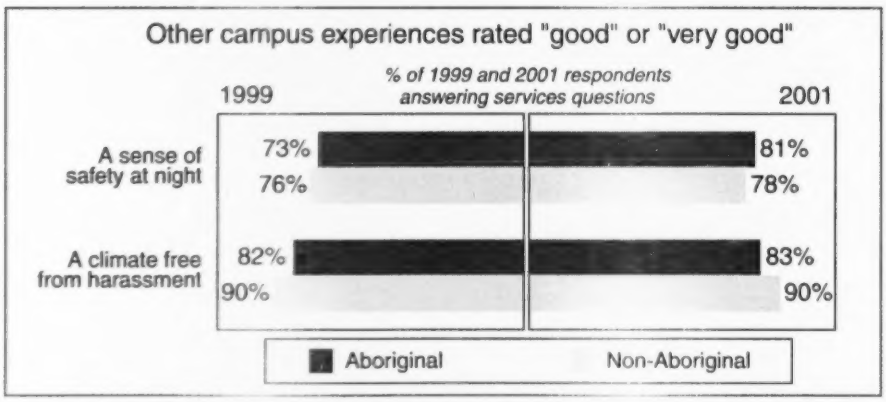
[14] In 1999 and 2001, approximately 50 percent of respondents answered questions about services—these respondents were not asked the finance questions. For more information, see *Evaluation of Services and Facilities by Former College, University College, and Institute Students: Special Report on Services and Facilities from the 1999 BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey*, available at http://outcomes.ceiss.org/

Aboriginal *respondents were* more likely to give facilities good ratings

Former students were generally satisfied with their institution's facilities, although the "condition of the buildings" rated a lot higher than "drop-in computer stations" or "places on campus for socializing." In 2001, Aboriginal respondents were somewhat more likely than non-Aboriginal to say that places for socializing, food services, and places to study were "good" or "very good."

Aboriginal respondents rate *freedom from harassment* slightly lower

Former students were also asked to rate two less tangible things: "a sense of safety and security at night" and "a climate free from harassment or discrimination." Most respondents gave these items high ratings; in fact, freedom from harassment achieved the highest ratings of all services and facilities in both 1999 and 2001. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents, however, were less likely to feel that their sense of safety and security at night deserved good ratings. Furthermore, Aboriginal respondents were somewhat less likely than non-Aboriginal to give freedom from harassment a "good" or very "good rating."



Like everyone else, Aboriginal respondents want more parking

Former students were asked how the overall experience at their campus could be improved; popular topics for Aboriginal respondents included improvements to library resources, more computer facilities, better food, and more places to socialize. The issue mentioned more often than any other was parking.

> *The library resources could be updated. Some of the stuff is from 1980.*
>
> *Provide more resources in library. Make it easier for students to use the facilities at the main campus.*
>
> *The computer labs are a real problem, getting access was hard.*
>
> *The cafeteria needs a wider variety of food, and the prices are quite high.*
>
> *I think that they could sell more healthy food instead of greasy food.*
>
> *More parking.*
>
> *We always need more parking.*
>
> *More parking.*
>
> *Parking! Parking! Parking!*
>
> *More parking.*

Some Aboriginal respondents had ideas to enhance the college experience for First Nations students

A handful of Aboriginal respondents had comments around First Nations issues—some were concerned about racism or said they had not always felt that they fit in, and a few made specific suggestions for improvement.

> *The style could be more traditional with a more First Nations based setting. There could be more native art and culture. Any new campuses should be designed by a First Nations architect.*
>
> *If they had First Nations elders there it would improve a lot. They did come once in a while, but there could be more interaction with First Nations elders.*

Conclusion

Report Purpose

The Ministry of Advanced Education requested this report as part of its ongoing commitment to measure the outcomes of Aboriginal former students who attended BC's public colleges, university colleges, and institutes. The Ministry's strategies for Aboriginal learners focus on access, participation, retention, and success; they include promoting choice in location and programming, increasing the number of Aboriginal people entering and completing post-secondary education, ensuring that institutions are sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal learners, and linking education to labour market opportunities.

Access

Aboriginal former students accessed their college and institute post-secondary education at locations throughout the province—their choices meant that, while studying, they were somewhat more evenly distributed throughout BC's regions than were non-Aboriginal former students. Aboriginal former students attended institutions outside the Lower Mainland, particularly in Northern BC, at higher rates.

The program choices made by Aboriginal respondents were wide-ranging and, for the most part, similar to the choices of their non-Aboriginal counterparts, the main difference being in Legal and Social programs, which Aboriginal respondents took at significantly higher rates.

Aboriginal former students were less likely to report using funds from family, employment, and personal savings to finance their studies, but for those who borrowed money, their total debt was not higher than that of non-Aboriginal former students—possibly because of Indian Band Funding, which was a top source of funding for 35 percent of Aboriginal former students.

Participation

While the rate of Aboriginal participation at colleges, university colleges, and institutes is not available from the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey, the rates of Aboriginal participation in the survey have increased from 2.8 percent in 1995 to 4.1 percent in 2001. This latter figure is the same as the proportion of the BC population aged 15 to 44 that was Aboriginal.

The majority of Aboriginal survey respondents reported that they had completed the requirements for a credential when they left their college and institute programs. The percentages of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents who obtained credentials were similar; percentages for both groups have increased since 1995.

Retention

One of the keys to retaining students in the post-secondary system is to be sensitive to their needs— for facilities and services as well as educational programming. Since 1995, Aboriginal former students have reported that their experiences with their institutions have been good. In fact, with few exceptions, they were more likely than non-Aboriginal former students to give high ratings to such things as instruction, program organization, equipment, financial aid services, library services, food services, and places for socializing.

Out of all the Aboriginal former students who answered an open-ended question about their programs, only a handful reported that they found a lack of sensitivity to First Nations issues.

Success

The employment outcomes of Aboriginal former students do not tell a clear success story. Unemployment rates have increased since 1995 and have been significantly higher for Aboriginal former students. Their full-time employment rates lag behind those of non-Aboriginal former students, although part-time employment rates are virtually the same.

Nevertheless, employed Aboriginal former students were more likely than all others to say that their job was related to their college, university college, and institute training, and that their education was useful to them in performing their job.

On a more positive note, the percentages of former students taking further education have increased over time, and the rates for Aboriginal respondents are not too far behind those of non-Aboriginal. While Aboriginal respondents are less likely to go to university, they continue their education at colleges, university colleges, and institutes at higher rates than non-Aboriginal respondents.

Appendix A

About the Student Outcomes Survey Project

The BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey Project collects and disseminates information about former students' post-secondary experiences and their subsequent labour market and further education experiences. The main component of the project is the BC Student Outcomes Survey, which is administered annually to former students of public colleges, university colleges, and institutes in British Columbia. The findings are used by institutions to evaluate and improve program offerings and services; by the Ministry of Advanced Education for policy evaluation and planning; and by students, parents and the general public to make informed post-secondary education choices.

This report is based on Student Outcomes Surveys conducted in 1995, 1997, 1999, and 2001. Former students were contacted by telephone 9–20 months after completing all, or a significant portion, of their educational program. In 1995, former students from 19 of BC's public colleges and institutes participated in the survey; by 2001, there were 22 institutions, as follows:

- British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Camosun College
- Capilano College
- College of New Caledonia
- College of the Rockies
- Douglas College
- Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design
- Institute of Indigenous Government
- Justice Institute of BC
- Kwantlen University College
- Langara College
- Malaspina University-College
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- North Island College
- Northern Lights College
- Northwest Community College
- Okanagan University College
- Open Learning Agency
- Selkirk College
- University College of the Cariboo
- University College of the Fraser Valley
- Vancouver Community College

The project is conducted with funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and British Columbia's public colleges, university colleges, and institutes. The British Columbia Outcomes Working Group (OWG) oversees all aspects of the project, from data collection to the reporting of survey results. The OWG is a partnership among the Ministry of Advanced Education, colleges, university colleges, and institutes, and system agencies, such as the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer.

Appendix B

Methodology

Cohort

The colleges, university colleges, and institutes identified former students for participation in the survey. With the exception of OLA, the survey cohorts provided by the institutions included former students who had either graduated or completed a substantial portion of their program requirements. OLA included only former students who completed their credential and graduated. There have been some changes in the selection criteria since 1995, but the definition of a former student has remained essentially the same.

For 2001, former students were defined as those who had:

- completed 75% of the credits required for a 13–36 month applied program; OR
- completed 100% of the credits required for a one-year or less applied program; OR
- completed at least 24 credits of an applied baccalaureate program; OR
- completed at least 24 credits of an Arts and Sciences program;

AND

- not been enrolled in their college or institute program between July 1 in the year preceding the survey and February 1 in the year of the survey.

Former students in the 1999 and 2001 survey cohorts were assigned at random to answer questions on either student finances or campus services and facilities. Former students from Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs were included in the 1997 and 1999 surveys; however, they have been excluded from the analysis for this report.

There were changes in cohort selection for the 2001 survey:

- For the first time, the Institute of Indigenous Government was included.
- The criterion for program completion in applied baccalaureate programs has been reduced to a minimum of 24 credits from the previous criterion of 48 credits. There may be a resulting change in the number of respondents in applied 4-year programs.

Analysis

The Centre for Education Information Standards and Services (CEISS) was responsible for cleaning and validating data received from the data collection contractor that conducted the survey. Based on these data—the responses to the survey questionnaire—the necessary variables were derived for analysis, which was conducted using MS Access and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

In addition to frequencies, crosstabs, and comparison of means, several tests were used to determine if the observed differences between groups were statistically significant. A statistically significant result is one that cannot reasonably be explained by chance alone. The level of significance for this analysis was set at .05, so that when a result is reported as *significant*, there is a 95 percent probability that the result reflects a real difference and is not due to chance.

Quality

The potential for errors to occur exists at almost every phase of a survey operation. Interviewers may misunderstand instructions, respondents may misinterpret questions or make errors in answering, and information may be recorded or tabulated inaccurately.

Considerable effort has been made by the data collection company and by CEISS to ensure that these errors were minimised. The interviewers were carefully trained on survey procedures and questionnaire content. The questionnaire was pre-tested and adjustments made to solve problems with the question flow and to change areas that were prone to misinterpretation. Once the survey was completed, CEISS applied a comprehensive series of validation procedures on the raw data.

Outliers

As part of the process of deriving variables for analysis, outliers have been removed, that is, not included in the analysis. An outlier is an individual response that lies well outside what is reasonably expected in answer to the question (for example, a student loan amount of $999,999).

Limitations

When interpreting the key findings presented in this report, consider the following limitations:

- The proportions of Aboriginal former students in the cohorts sent by the institutions are unknown; as a result, an Aboriginal response rate to the survey cannot be calculated. In 2001, almost two-thirds of the institutions provided a flag for Aboriginal students, but the match with those who identified themselves as Aboriginal was less than 35 percent.
- It is not known if all Aboriginal former students surveyed identified themselves as Aboriginal; some may have been reluctant to do so. Those respondents may have refused to answer the question or they may have said "no."
- Direct comparisons of survey questions year-to-year cannot always be done: some questions have changed, some use different scales, some questions have been deleted, some added.
- Former students surveyed are completers or near completers of their college programs; therefore, no information on those who left early is available.
- The former students who were interviewed—typically, less than three quarters of those eligible for surveying—were those from the cohort who could be located and who agreed to be surveyed. They may not be representative of all former students.

Percentages and rounding

For consistency and ease of presentation, percentages in the report text and charts have been rounded to whole numbers and may not always add to 100. For charts with a smaller scale, some differences between charted data points that have the same rounded value label may be noticeable, because data were plotted using one to three decimal places.

Unless otherwise noted, each percentage is based on the number of students who responded to the question—those who refused the question, or said "don't know," were not included in the calculation.

The median dollar amounts cited in the report text and charts have been rounded to the nearest $10.

Appendix C

Numbers of Respondents from Colleges, University Colleges, and Institutes

	1995		1997		1999	
	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal
British Columbia Institute of Technology	1,849	25	2,371	40	2,025	41
Camosun College	1,366	31	1,579	53	1,184	48
Capilano College	909	15	916	19	749	12
College of New Caledonia	652	42	592	31	461	40
College of the Rockies	425	6	261	7	176	6
Douglas College	1,512	28	1,134	24	1,018	29
Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design	103	*	78	*	40	
Institute of Indigenous Government						
Justice Institute of BC			167	10	94	*
Kwantlen University College	2,370	33	1,764	28	1,514	34
Langara College	1,536	24	1,159	14	886	23
Malaspina University-College	1,623	49	1,326	116	904	64
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	4	32	5	10	5	30
North Island College	517	31	525	34	394	34
Northern Lights College	303	30	312	23	164	13
Northwest Community College	294	52	223	38	160	32
Okanagan University College	1,625	35	1,592	49	969	34
Open Learning Agency			202	17	119	*
Selkirk College	645	4	484	23	426	20
University College of the Cariboo	1,380	80	1,322	95	794	68
University College of the Fraser Valley	723	17	783	26	676	30
Vancouver Community College	1,344	21	1,333	33	1,020	28
TOTAL	**19,180**	**556**	**18,128**	**692**	**13,778**	**590**

Note: The totals above are somewhat less than the total number of respondents, because every year ther refuse to answer the question, *Are you an Aboriginal person?*

* Not reported: N < 3.

Appendix C

Numbers of Respondents from Colleges, University Colleges, and Institutes

	1995		1997		1999		
	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	N
British Columbia Institute of Technology	1,849	25	2,371	40	2,025	41	
Camosun College	1,366	31	1,579	53	1,184	48	
Capilano College	909	15	916	19	749	12	
College of New Caledonia	652	42	592	31	461	40	
College of the Rockies	425	6	261	7	176	6	
Douglas College	1,512	28	1,134	24	1,018	29	
Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design	103	*	78	*	40		
Institute of Indigenous Government							
Justice Institute of BC			167	10	94	*	
Kwantlen University College	2,370	33	1,764	28	1,514	34	
Langara College	1,536	24	1,159	14	886	23	
Malaspina University-College	1,623	49	1,326	116	904	64	
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	4	32	5	10	5	30	
North Island College	517	31	525	34	394	34	
Northern Lights College	303	30	312	23	164	13	
Northwest Community College	294	52	223	38	160	32	
Okanagan University College	1,625	35	1,592	49	969	34	
Open Learning Agency			202	17	119	*	
Selkirk College	645	4	484	23	426	20	
University College of the Cariboo	1,380	80	1,322	95	794	68	
University College of the Fraser Valley	723	17	783	26	676	30	
Vancouver Community College	1,344	21	1,333	33	1,020	28	
TOTAL	19,180	556	18,128	692	13,778	590	

Note: The totals above are somewhat less than the total number of respondents, because every year ther refuse to answer the question, *Are you an Aboriginal person?*

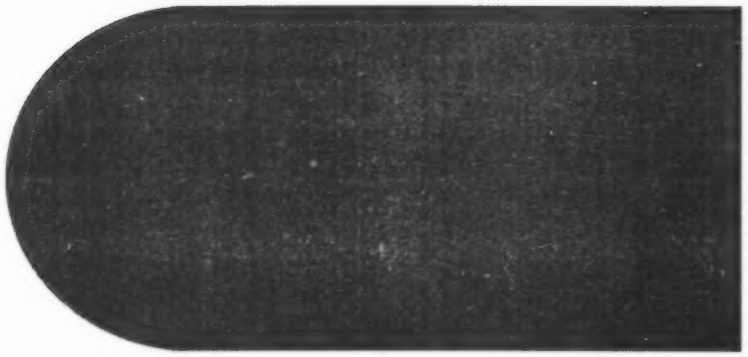
* Not reported: N < 3.

Appendix D

Top ten occupations for 1999 and 2001

	Aboriginal	N	%	Non-Aboriginal	N	%
2001	Community & Social Service Workers	38	10.0	Registered Nurses	373	3.7
	Cooks	17	4.5	Retail Salespersons	317	3.2
	Retail Salespersons	12	3.1	Computer Programmers	258	2.6
	Accounting & Related Clerks	12	3.1	Community & Social Service Workers	196	2.0
	General Office Clerks	11	2.9	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	192	1.9
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	10	2.6	Accounting & Related Clerks	189	1.9
	Administrative Officers	9	2.4	General Office Clerks	176	1.8
	Secretaries (Except Legal & Medical)	9	2.4	Computer Operators	174	1.7
	Early Childhood Educators	9	2.4	Financial Auditors & Accountants	164	1.6
	Correctional Service Officers	8	2.1	Food & Beverage Servers	156	1.6
1999	Carpenters	13	5.3	Registered Nurses	287	4.0
	Community & Social Service Workers	12	4.9	Retail Salespersons	254	3.6
	Early Childhood Educators	10	4.0	Accounting & Related Clerks	187	2.6
	General Office Clerks	8	3.2	General Office Clerks	181	2.5
	Visiting Homemakers & Housekeepers	7	2.8	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	156	2.2
	Registered Nurses	7	2.8	Food & Beverage Servers	133	1.9
	Nurse Aides & Orderlies	7	2.8	Early Childhood Educators	127	1.8
	Food & Beverage Servers	6	2.4	Computer Operators	119	1.7
	Social Workers	6	2.4	Visiting Homemakers & Housekeepers	119	1.7
	Accounting & Related Clerks	5	2.0	Financial Auditors & Accountants	119	1.7

Note: Respondents are those employed full-time (in their main job, if they have more than one).



For more information on
2001 BC College and Institute Aboriginal Former Student Outcomes
please contact:

The Centre for Education Information
4th Floor, 1483 Douglas Street
Victoria, British Columbia, V8W 3K4
Tel: (250) 413-4400
Fax: (250) 413-4401
E-mail: outcomes@ceiss.org
Web: www.ceiss.org

Online edition available at http://outcomes.ceiss.org/Publications/